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THE TRUTH IN LOVE

WILLIAM R. RICHARDS, D.D.

Richards W. R.
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W. W. Richards

The Truth In Love

FROM THE SERMONS OF

WILLIAM R. RICHARDS, D. D.

ARRANGED FOR DAILY READINGS
BY
A. VAN DOREN HONEYMAN

"Loving men is the Scriptural rule for knowing God."

Plainfield, New Jersey
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1912

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William Rogers Richards

1853-1910

Central Church, Bath, Maine, 1879-1884
Crescent Avenue Church, Plainfield, N. J., 1884-1902
Brick Church, New York City, 1902-1910

Introductory

A GREAT, pure soul passed from earth when Dr. William R. Richards, on January 7th, 1910, answered the sudden call to go hence and company with his Divine Master.

Unique in his influence as a successful Christian minister; singularly beloved by his people in three parishes; admired as a citizen because of his lofty moral sentiments, often expressed, on civic questions, he was translated to his Eternal Home when intellect and strength were in the plentitude of their powers, and his responsibilities at the mark of high noon.

From his earliest ministry his mind was ripe with spiritual truths; and, while there appeared added richness and mellowness in his preaching in his later days, he varied little during his active and beautiful life in his manner of speech in the pulpit, and none in the wholesome, uplifting, thoroughly righteous doctrines he felt it his mission to inculcate. The one foundation of all his

messages from the sacred desk was Jesus Christ —His life, His words, His atoning work. Humanitarian doctrines had place in his sermons only as they were illuminated by the clear sunlight of God's unfathomable love and purpose; and such he preached with heartfelt energy. He was as catholic as the air we breathe in all the non-essentials of denominational creeds, which to him were guide-posts of the ages, but not the Bible. The Divine law, man's duty to man, and the certainty of the Life Everlasting, were the trio of propositions in which he delighted—the pattern, the obligation and the hope for Christian service and victorious manhood and womanhood.

In being privileged to examine carefully some hundreds of his sermons delivered at his three parishes, in Maine, New Jersey and New York City—many of them repeated by request, some before colleges and schools—one finds in them all the same golden threads of unselfish helpfulness toward those struggling in temptation; the same unalterable Christly ideals; the same practical hope for everybody who would "elect" to be upright, pure, unselfish and prayerful; the same constant warnings that the consequences of sin in this world are inexorable, coupled with the

Gospel proclamation that repentance and a new life could save men "to the uttermost."

One cannot study these sermons without observing that two of the important truths which constituted the bases of his preaching were, that wonderful conception of the Apostle John, that "God is love," and the correlated aphorism (his own), that "loving *men* is the Scriptural rule for knowing God." It is because he always spoke "the truth in love," as Paul urged it should be spoken, that the title for these extracts has been chosen.

So marked was this personal, sacred possession by him, of love for the Divine and love for the human, that it irradiated his face at times with a strange and heavenly illumination—

"The light that never was on sea or land."

His countenance then, sympathetic, affectionate, exultant with hope, saintly, we who knew and loved him remember so well—an unconscious tribute to his own highborn character, and a Christlike benediction to others of peace and good will.

His language was simple and direct, and frequently argumentative. He reasoned things out; reasoned closely; and, when he made his point,

it was so fortified as to be impregnable. For this reason it has been difficult to detach short sentences from his sermons, and thus wrest them from what precedes or succeeds. Every thought so overlaps another that usually only long quotations would give just the idea he is seeking to convey. While his style was simplicity itself, his mental processes as spoken were an interwoven warp and woof. In other words, each sermon was a complete whole, and any one part of it now detached fails to exhibit the beautiful symmetry of that whole. Nevertheless, many of his gracious sayings have been treasured up by welcoming minds, and it is hoped that a few of them may be found among those contained in this volume.

It is needless to say that this fragmentary work is not published so much for any expected general circulation, as for those of his dear and valued former parishioners and friends to whom it may serve to renew a spiritual acquaintance with Dr. Richards. Such, it is believed, will feel a peculiar gratification in using its pages for daily readings; and if to any the result shall be to continue the influence of this rare teacher in the building up of human character upon the grounds of faith pointed out by him with so

much candor and felicity, the preparation of this volume, which has been wholly one of love, will not have been in vain.

The likeness of Dr. Richards, which serves as a frontispiece to the book, is from a photograph by Alman, of New York, taken early in 1903.

Acknowledgment must be made here of the warmest appreciation by the compiler of the personal coöperation of Mrs. William R. Richards, now of Bridgeport, Conn., without whose sympathy and direct aid this book could not have been prepared; also of the important assistance of Miss Carrie C. Dewey, of Plainfield, a co-laborer in the same service; also of the courtesy of Charles Scribner's Sons, Fleming H. Revell Co., and the Presbyterian Board of Publication, in permitting quotations to be taken from copyrighted works published by them, which works, among others, are noted on another page.

A. V. D. H.

Plainfield, N. J., Nov. 4, 1912.

The Truth in Love

The question is raised sometimes, whether that ancient institution of the Christian ministry is not nearing its limits; whether this is not rather the age of the library and the newspaper; whether the age of the preacher has not gone by. More than once it has begun to seem so. But just as the world was about to settle down to such a conclusion, again and again God sent with it some living man, who could speak so that the sheep knew His voice. . . . What is the secret of the extraordinary influence of such men? I do not know. One can only say that God has given some men a mysterious power of personality, and also the ability to express it; and whenever that personality has been taken possession of by the Christ who gave His life for men, there the sheep hear the voice and delight to hear and follow.

The Truth in Love

January first—New Year's

Like a company of travelers, we are wandering homeless on, whither we do not know. This day slips by quickly while we talk about it; and then comes the dark, and then perhaps another day; but we enter it as strangers in a strange land. Yet it is our privilege, if we will trust the promise of Jesus, to move on into this strange new country as cheerful and fearless as some little child at home, who sees above him the roof and all about him the safe walls of his father's house.

January second

Providence appoints for us bright days with the Beatitudes as well as dark nights in Gethsemane; and while the day lasts let us rejoice in the light of it,

January third

We cannot silence these curious hearts of ours. No matter how we try to busy them with other things, they will turn back to the old questions about the unseen, the soul, the future life, God. The soul, the real man, underneath this changing garment of mortality: what is the real man back of it all, who inhabits it, and uses it, and rules it, and draws in his knowledge through its channels of sense, and works out his will through its intricate mechanism of nerve and muscle; who loves and hates, sins and repents?

January fourth

This narrow gate, which one must choose to enter by himself alone; this narrow way of determined, undeviating faith in God, and loving obedience to Him; oh! it leads into a very spacious country, . . where there is room to draw all your loved ones, and even to number among them those who were once counted enemies. There is breadth for you. It leads into eternal life—that path does; it leads into the very fulness of God.

January fifth

Other things change, come and go, grow and die: customs, fashions, languages, nations of men, books, schools, political parties, clubs and societies of reform. These are creatures of a day. But one society, the Church, in its essential characteristics and vital principles, changes not, except to grow on and thrust out ever new shoots. . . Mortally wounded, levelled to the earth times without number, it only sinks its roots the deeper and throws out its shoots over a wider region; and it will yet lift its head the higher and thrust forth fair branches every way, until the old prophesy is fulfilled, and the nations of the earth come and rest under its gracious shelter.

January sixth

The one hopeless tragedy of growing up and growing old is to lose your ideals. Escape that peril and there will be no tragedy in growing old.

January seventh

Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. We believe in this more abundant life that He has promised us, this life everlasting. And I am well assured that all the rich and novel experiences of the unknown future shall never rob me of this personal identity to which I cling so fondly now. I myself, blessed be God, am going to live on. . . Life—that is a good word to stand at the end of a Christian's creed.

January eighth

One strong reason for following Him with loyal fidelity—for inducing our neighbors to follow Him with loyal fidelity—is that we and they may be delivered from the fear of death, which holds men all their lifetime subject to bondage. . . Let men see, as they look at you, that the one strong reason for trusting ourselves and our dear ones to Jesus Christ is because He and He only has the words of eternal life.

January ninth

A life of faith and of loving service, whether on earth or in heaven—that is the soul's home. Do not waste your life out in the wilderness. It is a doleful place there. The world and its fashions are ageing every day, withering, changing, darkening. The light of a better day is shining, brighter and brighter; more and more of those angel faces will smile upon you.

"Old friends, old scenes will lovelier be
As more of heaven in each we see."

Come home, come home! Life will still be a sort of pilgrimage, perhaps, but every step of it will be taking us into brighter, sweeter, more homelike regions, until at last "the day break and the shadows flee away."

January tenth

In the presence of death our Christian faith ought to be speaking, always, in a tone of triumph.

January eleventh

The Divine Master has gone beyond our sight, but He is not dead. He is alive, and because He lives, we shall live also, and we shall see Him. . . Sometime, somewhere, some day, the Master shall call His servants before Him, and take account of them, and we want to keep that day in mind when we are deciding now what sort of life will be best worth living.

January twelfth

The water of the river down in the valley is fit to drink, if you are thirsty enough, but it has not the delicious coolness and freshness of that spring upon the mountain, a mile or two nearer heaven. If you want to enjoy that you must take the pains to climb up there for it. There are some religious truths that are a sort of common possession for the multitudes of people who live at their ease down in the valley. But down on that lower level these truths have never quite the same flavor as up on the height, where some one first climbed to discover them.

January thirteenth

There is a home of the soul which change and decay cannot touch—whose walls never fall into dilapidation, but, rather, are built higher and stronger every day with courses of imperishable masonry.

January fourteenth

How pathetic it is to watch the efforts of men when they have tried to turn back or check the current of this river of Time! We appoint our commemorative anniversaries, links holding us to the past. We band ourselves together in ancestral societies. We build monuments to the heroes that have been. We make pilgrimages to the old houses and old shrines. . . But in a moment we draw back shuddering; for the great monument, when we touch it, proves to be nothing but a grave; the chill of death is there. There is nothing like a "home" for any living man.

January fifteenth

"Be of good cheer," Christ used to say to His disciples. Be cheerful; that is our modern English for it. Carry that sort of look on your face as of a person who has heard a piece of rare good news; carry that sort of tone in your voice. If the circumstances of your life are depressing; if you have known what it was to suffer pain, or to lose your goods, or even to lose your friends, and in spite of that can be of good cheer, it will mean all the more; a candle shining all the brighter when it is shining in the dark.

January sixteenth

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." In that unfathomable but radiant mystery of the sacrifice of the Son of God, you have the fifth commandment as it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

January seventeenth

Some day, please God, if we keep on patiently going, these scales shall drop from our eyes; these deaf ears shall be unstopped; this heavy veil shall be drawn aside; we shall see Him face to face.

January eighteenth

In so many ways God has been seeking us—by the joys He sends us; by the sorrow and disappointments that He allows to fall upon us; by the human loves He gives and then for awhile takes away; by all the force of holy example and teaching; by the whispers of conscience; by the hunger and thirst He has put in our souls; by the life of His dear Son, and by His death, and all the gracious influence of His spirit. In ten thousand ways He has been seeking us.

January nineteenth

Every worthy church of Jesus Christ ought to be a working church. Its worthy members ought to be asking for ability to show themselves working members; busy members. . . My idea of a church is a great business corporation, an industrial co-operative concern; men and women associated together for the sake of accomplishing more work than they could accomplish separately in a world where unlimited amounts of work are waiting to be done.

January twentieth

Why should anyone be ashamed of Jesus Christ? It seems a most irrational and incomprehensible emotion. . . One can easily understand that a man might be ashamed not to be a Christian; but how could he be ashamed to be a Christian?

January twenty-first

It is part of the deepest element of all religious experience that we should feel ourselves to be standing in the presence of One who knows us altogether, and willingly to lay our hearts bare before Him, and pray that He would see it all as it is, and take the evil away, and make us right and true as He is true.

January twenty-second

As human society grows more Christian, the conscience of men will be busied more and more looking after their sins of omission. Positive crimes, like murder, can be left largely to the rude law of the state. But this higher tribunal, this court—the conscience of man, which under God is the Supreme Court of the nations—will give its time to convicting men of their intolerable guilt toward one another because of the things that they have not done.

January twenty-third

Any damaging statement against a neighbor's character is a most deadly weapon. It is your business to know whether it is true or false before you touch it. Indeed, true or false, you have no right to amuse yourself with a thing so deadly. Unless there is some good and sufficient reason, you must not bear even true witness against your neighbor. The rule is: Keep still, as long as you possibly can.

January twenty-fourth

A properly enlightened conscience insists that a man should prove himself worth his salt; and, if he consumes a specially large proportion of salt, it becomes him to exhibit a correspondingly large proportion of worthiness. If he cost the community more than the average, he ought to be rendering a correspondingly greater service to the community.

January twenty-fifth

When Jesus Christ calls His friends together to remember Him, of course it would be shameful for any man who was not a true friend to push himself in among them fraudulently, and profess that he was a friend of Christ. But might it not be as sad an offense against truth and as painful to the Master when the friends of Christ are called together to acknowledge Him, if some one, who really was His friend, should hold his peace and turn away as if he loved Him not?

January twenty-sixth

So far as I do honestly love my neighbor it becomes impossible for me to covet the things that are his. Either the loving will drive out the coveting, or else the coveting will keep out the loving.

January twenty-seventh

We want to keep on touching Jesus Christ, in all our times of need and trouble; yes, we want to have His touch upon us in all our times of action and hopeful endeavor. And I suppose the one best service one can render any friend or neighbor whom we wish to help is to bring him to the place where he also, in the spirit and the motive of his life, shall touch Jesus. Whithersoever He went, in villages, or cities, or country, "as many as touched Him were made whole."

January twenty-eighth

It is inevitable that the man will become like Jesus if he passes enough time with Him.

January twenty-ninth

In all our journeys through the world, whether toward Jericho or any other city, we are to keep our eyes open for every opportunity to be saving men's lives; for, if ever we neglect one such opportunity, we may soon hear the Judge saying in condemnation, "Inasmuch as ye did it not."

January thirtieth

We cannot say who, out of all who come under our influence, may yield to influences for good; therefore try and hope for all. So often as you are brought into personal relations with anyone, act as if he were the one whom you are to help toward Jesus Christ. "Thou knowest not whether shall prosper this or that." Therefore let no chance go by.

January-thirty-first

"Whosoever wills to save his soul shall lose it." You must find something better than that to work for if you would taste the sweetness of Christ's salvation. You must look away from yourself. You must look at Him, the Son of God, who was willing to give His life that we poor sinners might live. You must drink in His spirit. You must learn the secret of His cross; forget yourself in some loving service for those about you. So losing your life for His sake—that is salvation; then you shall find it.

February first

Arbitration means that you have arranged things so that two enemies can go on a little longer without actual fighting. But reconciliation means that their hearts have been changed and the old enemies are friends.

February second

Man's cry of need, the exceeding bitter cry, is like the deafening roar of the surf when the winter storm hurls the waves far up upon the beach; this hoarse cry of hunger, thirst, loneliness, sorrow, sickness, pain, worry, guilty despair. . . We want to get it out of our ears; we are weary of it, driven distracted by it. It breaks in upon our work and our play, our rest and our worship. Yes, our worship. Why will not this needy world give us at least time enough to find some solitary and restful place where we may be still and commune with God?

February third

"No man but Jesus only." We seem to understand ourselves better when we are looking simply into His face and listening to His voice. It was He who led us up the mountain for the vision. It must be He who can lead us down to work.

February fourth

Let us never forget that the bigger church machine you have the more power you will need to make it go. Whether in the days of Elijah, or of the apostles, or of the Reformers, or in this bustling nineteenth century of ours, the only original source of that power is God; and the way for us to be sure of commanding that power is to know the way straight to God in prayer.

February fifth

The miracle of the loaves is one of the few events in our Lord's life which has been described in all of the four Gospels. It was so strikingly illustrative of Christ's attitude to the world, that even if the story had been told again and again and again, each new narrator felt that he must tell it once more.

February sixth

Paul asked for what he thought he wanted, to be healed of his painful infirmity. But the Father knew, what the child did not yet know, that to take away the discipline of that infirmity would be robbing the child of such spiritual strength and grace as would be worth to him far more than any possible bodily health. So he answered: "My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness;" and the child, being a true child, accepted the answer with great thankfulness—"Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities."

February seventh

A shameful thing it will be for any man to pass through this greatly imperilled world without helping a single person in it to nobler, diviner manhood.

February eighth

It is a great comfort if your path has brought you into trouble, or seems to be heading that way, to know the Lord will never send you or any other of His children on any hard or painful journey that He has not already trodden before.

February ninth

Are you old enough to remember your well-beloved New England village back toward the middle of the last century: the old meeting house by the village green, where noisy schoolboys were playing their ball-match yesterday afternoon —but not this morning? Now yesterday's victors and vanquished alike are feeling something of the peace of God, and as the bell begins to toll you see the farmers' wagons from miles away up over the brow of the hill discharge their living load at the door of the church. For them the whole population will come together on this one day of the week to renew its communal fellowship. It is a sweet memory to some of us.

February tenth

We are living, all of us, in a world redeemed at such a cost, and we are treating it so lightly!

February eleventh

I wish God would put a double portion of the old prophetic spirit into the Christians of this land that we might be well persuaded that He, the God of nations, is as truly interested in the landing at Plymouth Rock as He was in the crossing of the Red Sea; as truly interested in Lincoln's "Emancipation Proclamation" as He was in Moses' bringing Hebrew slaves out of Egypt; as truly interested in our Declaration of Independence as He was in the psalms of Moses and Miriam: so that, if we Americans should after all make shipwreck of our great experiment at freedom and righteousness, we might know that it would stir the Divine heart to infinite sorrow and indignation, as when the Son of God wept over Jerusalem, saying: "If Thou hadst known—if thou hadst known—even Thou in this Thy day."

February twelfth — Lincoln's Birthday

We should hardly have thought of saying it at the time, but I think it will be generally admitted to-day that, through the last year or two of his life, Lincoln had become the foremost religious leader of the American people; that he, more nearly than any other living man, filled for us the place of one of the ancient Hebrew prophets; the man who spoke for God, and who was able to make others find the Divine authority of his message.

February thirteenth

It is not necessary to leave one's work to become a helper of the human race. Life is made up of small deeds. It was the giving of a cup of cold water and the widow's mite that Christ commended.

February fourteenth

How often the conviction comes to us that much of one's progress has been the wrong way. We are apt to look back to our childhood as a kind of Paradise. Those were the days when we had little knowledge of evil; hardly knew the voice of temptation; and when it would not have seemed very strange if, some day, we had heard the voice of the Lord God walking among the trees of the garden. But the progress of the years since seems to have carried us far away from Him, and to have stained our souls with so much sin. O that some one would roll back for us these misued years!

February fifteenth

To minister in any simple way to one of the least of the Lord's brethren is to minister to Him. To give bread to the hungry, or shelter to the naked, or comfort to the lonely—any practical service of humanity—is a true glorifying of God.

February sixteenth

I like to see a hill now and then. It cheers the soul to know that those tall peaks still stand firm in their places. If any modern reform should ever succeed in scraping them all into the ocean, many of us would want to move off to some other planet. But that shall not be. God's world will still retain its beautiful and wholesome variety. Both in this world of nature and also in the world of His providence, His human world, there will be heights and depths, and the heights will often be growing higher, and, alas, we may sometimes see the depths grow darker and deeper. But even that may not be so disastrous as a dead level for the whole world.

February seventeenth

To become a Christian is to let Christ, our Elder Brother, lead you into what was always your birthright as a child of God.

February eighteenth

For we know that God is true. He is kind also, and would deal tenderly with His children, but, first of all, He is true. He hates every false way.

February nineteenth

Who are our real benefactors? Is it not those who have taught us something about God; who have made virtue and faithfulness real to us: who have dispelled in some degree the mystery of our sorrow and doubt: who have given us hope of pardon for our sins, and hope that the lost purity may somehow be regained: who have brought us to believe in prayer; who have helped us to receive and know as true that supreme wonder, which at the same time proves itself the only key to all the riddles of nature and man, that the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth?

February twentieth

Remember there is a false silence which would be as shameful as any falseness of speech.

February twenty-first

Samson had his laugh out of the Philistine men, but their sisters avenged them on him, making a slave and tool and fool of him. The old writer tells his tale straight on without stopping to moralize much, but where can you find a sermon on the need of personal purity like this—so magnificently strong; so fatally and contemptibly weak. Of the two forms of sin which specially assail young men Samson may guard us from the one by way of example, and from the other by way of warning. Touching no wine, he excelled in strength; but he listened to Delilah, and there quickly followed weakness, darkness, the prison-house, the grave. He was a weakling beside that hero of Tennyson's, who could say:

"My good blade carves the casques of men;
My tough lance thrusteth sure;
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."

February twenty-second — Washington's Birthday

No criticism can ever dim the outlines of that personal character, that figure of a loyal gentleman, which stands erect and firm before the world. . . It may be open to question how much of the grand results achieved were due rather to the extraordinary genius of Alexander Hamilton and some of his other associates. There may be differences of opinion on these lines, but of Washington's claim to stand among the few finest gentlemen of all time there will be no doubt. Like the Psalmist of old he could have said: "Thy gentleness hath made me great."

Oh! in the midst of all this modern turmoil and clamor—how restful and wholesome it is now and then to turn our eyes back to the serene figure of our first great American, a man whose busy life still left him time enough for courtesy, and for dignified reserve, and for thoughts of honor and duty and loftiest patriotism.

February twenty-third

It is nothing to be vain about that you happened to be born in one place rather than another, but it is everything to be thankful for that it was America.

February twenty-fourth

Let us learn to think of our homes very reverently as the temples of the God who hath here builded us together into families; and let us be careful to do nothing that would destroy or defile this temple. Any unkind or cruel word—bad enough anywhere—but spoken at home, it becomes a kind of blasphemy, breaking down the walls of the temple of God. May each of our homes be a place where the peace of God is never broken; where the daily prayer to God never ceases; where the ancient benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit," rests upon all as an abiding fact.

February twenty-fifth

Our human judgments are apt to be mistaken. "The Lord looketh upon the heart, but man looketh upon the outward appearance," and even the very wisest of men may not see very far beneath the outward appearance. A good deal of the barbarian is left in us all; and if we are eager to pass judgment against our neighbor, we may often be calling him bad names, when he really is a saint. Let us rather leave that to One whose judgments are all righteous.

February twenty-sixth

Character is a finer thing than knowledge; holiness is a finer thing than artistic intuition; the love of Christ is a finer thing than the friendship of distinguished people; the sense of God's presence in the heart is a finer thing than the rapture of a poet; the hope of an eternal home on high is a finer thing than the hope of an immortality of earthly fame.

February twenty-seventh

Be sure to find some man's work to do; pray God to give you some man's work to do with your strength of body and your strength of mind, and the natural, good-humored hopefulness of your young manhood. That is a prayer you need not fear to offer in Christ's name; it is a Christian prayer.

February twenty-eighth

Wherever my day's journey takes me the wide world over, in life or in death, I have learned from Christ to bear myself, not as a trembling slave, but fearlessly as a child in my own Father's house. That is the liberty with which Christ has made us free. Let us stand fast in it, or, if any of you heretofore have felt yourselves excluded from it, come into it now.

February twenty-ninth

If we could be satisfied and at rest with mere physical well-being, that would be a wretched condition. Really starving, but with no sense of the deadly pain of it. But this eager, inquisitive, painful restlessness; this infinite craving, is a blessed condition. "Blessed is such spiritual poverty."

March first

Other men labored and we enter into their labors; we in our turn labor and perhaps other men may enter into our labors. We can leave God to assign the credit as seems good to Him. If only the fruit is borne; if only we are ready in all humility to do our part, working with others toward the bearing of the fruit, a day draws near when the harvest shall be complete, "and he that soweth, and he that reapeth shall rejoice together."

March second

The right sort of hope, a Christian's hopefulness, must be among the most tenacious and indestructible things in the world, for it allies itself with, and expresses itself through, that other word, which has no sound of fickleness—"patience."

March third

No man has a right to despair; and, furthermore, we have no right to despair of any one when our Master puts him in our way, and gives us some message for him. It is no answer to say, "Lord, he is too far gone; he is past saving; there is nothing left in him now by which even Thy grace could take hold of him to redeem him." No, no; when the Lord silenced that objection in the life of Ananias, He silenced it for us all. "Go" —that is His only answer to such objections. "Go!"

March fourth

Whether a man is able to live in a palace, or must put up with a room in a tenement house, is not the most important matter; whether he can ride in a fine carriage or must trudge along the crowded sidewalk; whether he has genius and can sing or speak, so that the multitudes love to listen, or his words are such as no one cares for except a friend or two who know him best. Those are the changing accidents of existence. The important and enduring things are the qualities of his soul.

March fifth

Every good road in the world represents some common fashion of traveling from one place to another. The trouble is that these fashions of the world are apt to climb out of their rightful place of useful service into a place of insolent command.

March sixth

Whatever faculty of reverence any of us now possess, let us make the most of it, for that is one of the things essential to any fruitful Christian life. And let us pray for a quick, sensitive sympathy with all manifestations of this same sentiment among our neighbors, that we may never needlessly wound or hinder them in their own sense of looking toward God.

March seventh

As we have sins to be forgiven we can trust Him for their forgiveness. As we have a long journey to make through this world, perplexing, difficult, dangerous, we can trust Him to guide us in it. As we have a battle to fight against error and wrong and sin, we can trust Him as our commander in it.

March eighth

A judge, who has been appointed to dispense justice, holds a sacred office. The Scripture calls him, as truly as it calls a preacher, a minister of God. And if this judge's name is Elisha, you will find him scrupulously sensitive in the exercise of his sacred office. If Naaman had had a case tried before him, and the judge pronounced in his favor, and grateful Naaman had urged some gift upon him, Elisha would answer, "As Jehovah liveth, I will not touch it." We honor him for the answer. The public conscience has been sensitive enough to insist that he shall give that answer. We will not let our judge take pay for his decision.

March ninth

The real value of money is always in some useful process or progress that it can be made to serve.

March tenth

Faith and cowardice are mutually exclusive. Just so far as a man lets his faith in such a being as Jesus Christ hold him up, it is impossible that he should be afraid of anything or anybody. It makes him strong and very courageous. And courage goes so far in this world; it is what we all need so much. If anyone has learned where to find a plentiful supply of it, we can well understand how he should thank God and go forward.

March eleventh

Nearly all that is best in human life is gathered within the walls of the home. Love is there, and truth, and faith, and praise. It is where we learn to obey and to command, to enjoy ourselves and deny ourselves in loving service. It is where first we learn to pray, and to believe in God, and to hope for heaven.

March twelfth

The Son was like His Father in the quality of silence. In God's works nothing impresses us more than the silence of them. Sometimes of course there will be sound, beautiful or terrible—the murmuring of the wind, the laughing of the brook, the roar of the breakers, the crash of the thunder, the shriek of the hurricane—but the greater works are very still. The sunrise is greater than Niagara; the little engines that we make drive you half mad with their creaking and puffing, but the machinery which carries earth and planets round the sun would not wake the lightest sleeper.

March thirteenth

If God has given you some new insight into His word, or some choicer experience of His grace, or any other good thing, do not forget to thank Him for the gift; but do not forget to share the benefit of it with your friends.

March fourteenth

Music sometimes stirs us in a way that mere words cannot stir us. . . . A few notes from a bugle will bring all the pomp and tragedy of war before you; the solemn tones of the requiem will speak forth your sorrow as all the orators on earth could never speak it; and a verse of two of a song by the voice of a child will sometimes almost lift the curtain so that we can see the invisible. I suppose they may be right who say that music is a language of the infinite, and makes us aware for a moment of our almost forgotten birthright by the side of God.

March fifteenth

Only a few men in any community can be great, but it is offered to all men everywhere to be good. The gifts of genius are rare, and God's methods of bestowing them to one or another are beyond our control, but the gifts of character are God's sunshine; you have only to open your eyes to look at it. Like the pure air of heaven, you have only to open your windows and open your lungs and breathe it in.

March sixteenth

"The Father is seeking." That is the truth that will make your church dear and sacred to you who worship in it. In every part of the service God's activity comes first. . . Long before any of us began to worship, the Father was seeking us to worship.

March seventeenth

Friend, parent, lover, whoever you are who have some injury to forgive, do not spoil that most sacred exercise of mercy by your own grudging and reluctant air in performing it. The quality of forgiveness is not strained. Think what tokens of Divine joy appear whenever God succeeds in getting His forgiveness to any penitent child of His! "When he had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." That is God's way of forgiving such debts, frankly, freely, as if there could be nothing in this world that He so much liked to do.

March eighteenth

Human souls cannot be made and redeemed by the wholesale, as you would deal with bales of merchandise. We may have all sorts of most admirable societies and charities, whose work is invaluable in its place, but, after all, somebody is waiting for *you* to reach over and touch him. Someone is hungering and thirsting for a little human sympathy from *your* heart. . . Someone, somewhere, is waiting for a letter from *you*, written with your own hand.

March nineteenth

Very great wealth, after it is attained, has been found likely to sap and kill the very virtues which contributed to its attainment. The old time frugal industry gives way to luxury and to crazy speculation, and then farewell to national greatness, and soon farewell to the wealth also.

March twentieth

A man must have courage; the courage that rests on faith; faith in the principles on which he is working; faith in the value of his own work. He must throw himself into it. Not infrequently emergencies arise when, if one is to get any large success, or to keep what he has already obtained, this courage must rise almost to the point of audacity; . . . like Cortez burning his ships behind him; or Grant at Vicksburg cutting loose from his source of supplies.

March twenty-first

Chastening is a grievous thing, and we naturally try to avoid it for ourselves and for others, and yet we cannot expect to avoid it always and altogether. The chastening will still come to many of God's children, but, when it comes, and when they bear it with patience and courage, it often builds up in them a peculiar kind of strength of character that they get in no other way.

March twenty-second

The human countenance is an amazing countenance, because it actually bridges the chasm between matter and mind, and brings out visibly before the eyes of men the secret processes of the soul; and the entire drama of human perdition and salvation, more than all that the poet Dante wrote into his "Inferno," and "Purgatorio," and "Paradiso," may be written out visibly in living characters in the countenance of one man.

March twenty-third

Victory, the gladdest word that ear can hear, is sounding in our ears continually, if we will listen for it. And all the sweet messages of Easter day ought to make it sound louder for us, so that we can go back to-morrow into this wearisome fight with the Devil and all his works more hopefully. The fight is hard, but we will no longer call it desperate. We propose to win it, absolutely, without any compromise at all.

March twenty-fourth

Christ's resurrection was the spring-time of a summer that shall have no end; to all eternity light shall triumph over darkness; life over death. The resurrection does not take Christ away from us, but proves Him nearer than we had ever thought. It was His victory over death; but a victory which He won for all of us, His brethren.

March twenty-fifth

This Christian religion of ours, in spite of all that it has to say—and it has so much to say about sorrow and persecution, and sacrifice and the Cross—is yet a religion of joy. There was great joy at the beginning; there shall be greater joy at the end; and, in spite of all the sorrows, by faith in God we have a right to claim a large share of that joy all the way through.

March twenty-sixth

If Christ is our friend, we do well to be glad over His resurrection. . . Perhaps we have a right to be glad even now, as if the bitterness of death were already passed. For the worst part of it has already passed for us, if we have really committed our lives to this Almighty Saviour of men. . . We are just as sure that He can take us safely through the river of death as we are that He went through it safely Himself.

March twenty-seventh

The phrase "I cannot" does not sound well from a Christian in reply to any call to service or sacrifice. Have more faith in Him who offers the strength for doing anything He ever bids you do, and for bearing everything He ever bids you bear, and then you will be slow to say, "I cannot."

March twenty-eighth

You can never be sure of the reality of any virtue in the character of a child or of a man if you cannot depend upon his word.

March twenty-ninth

The Hebrew prophets had taught the world—and it was a grand revelation—that God is righteous; and right means straight. You can trust absolutely to the undeviating rectitude of God. There is no crookedness in Him. . . And yet we must know that this righteousness, straightness, rectitude, does not exhaust the idea of God. He is all that, but He is so much more than that. "Straight is the line of duty," says the old proverb, "curved is the line of beauty." And are not all the works of God, beyond description, beautiful? . . But grace has come by Jesus Christ; the infinite beauty of God has been incarnated. In Him the infinite strength has clothed itself with graceful beauty.

March thirtieth

The wonderful machinery of banking holds itself ready to further the operations of the Lord's host, just as much as any other operations in peace or war; and it seems to me that any man who is accustomed to meet his other financial obligations by simply signing his name to a draft, but who in religious matters still contents himself with bulky silver and copper, is a good deal behind the times.

March thirty-first

The solid character which Christ promises to develop in His disciples is not like a mushroom, but like a slow-growing tree; something which it will be worth while to wait for. And the kingdom of justice and purity and love, which will develop in any community when His gospel is faithfully preached, is something that it will be worth while to wait for, even if you should have to wait many weary years.

April first

Let us not be disobedient to heavenly visions. The great purpose for which we are placed side by side in this world seems to be the giving and receiving of help; the giving and receiving of the light of life. If you have not been brought into the light of Christian faith, God directs you to some believer, pastor, teacher, parent, friend, who can lay his hand upon you, that you may see. When you rejoice in that light, God directs you in turn to some one still groping in darkness.

April second

It is a healthy impulse which draws every thoughtful man at times to be alone. We need such intervals of quiet every little while, when we can make acquaintance with ourselves and with our God.

April third

You cannot discharge your full debt to the state by any mere payment of dollars. And neither can you so discharge your debt to the Church, to this great cause of human betterment, which for us is visibly embodied in the Church of Jesus Christ. You owe to it, for what it has been doing and is doing, everything that makes your life worth living, and you cannot discharge such a debt by any payment of dollars.

April fourth

"He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Any large success involves a large measure of faith; a large-hearted venture. Leave your timid paddling on the edge of the stream; "launch out into the deep," if you want your net filled.

April fifth

How many poor fellows have been, this last week, trying to collect some small sum of money that was owed to them, and it means the greatest inconvenience to them not to have it. Suffering, ruin perhaps, and yet they have been put off, and put off, till "a more convenient season," until now some of them are driven nearly mad by the delay. And if it is you or I who have been putting them off, I tell you a day of reckoning will come, when we may find it as hard to answer for that sinful procrastination as Felix for his before Paul.

April sixth

It is a quick journey that we have to make through this world, and we shall not pass this way again. If we are to help any of our fellow-travelers we shall have to avoid the habit of proscrastination. The only really convenient season for helping any of them is at this moment, when their path crosses ours.

April seventh

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." There may be much comfort in the thought, for it gives a large-minded indifference as to many of the matters that men contend about. Why interrupt your brother because he was building with gold and you with silver? The fire will try every man's work; time's testing will decide. You can afford to be patient. Wait a little while and whatever ought to come down will come down. Moreover, no serious damage can be done to the temple so long as the foundation is secure.

April eighth

Stop your false and foolish excuses for your past sin, that you may have breath to praise God for His pardon; and your idle excuses from duty, that you may have breath to say, "Here am I, send me;" and your complainings over your woes and imagined wrongs, that you may have breath to thank God for His mercies.

April ninth

The hymns that have in them the power of lasting through the ages come to be landmarks of devotion. The great creeds of the Church Universal come to be landmarks of the trust of the people of God.

April tenth

After Christ came, and under the influence of His teaching, a purer sentiment on the subject of marriage had gone on spreading among His disciples and gaining power down to times which some of us can remember, when any known violation of the seventh commandment, if not punished with death, would have involved a penalty of ostracism hardly less terrible; times when either the crime itself, or such separation as might follow it, was a shameful thing, to be spoken of only with bated breath and lowered eye, as when Jesus, hearing such a tale of shame, stooped down and wrote with His finger in the sand.

April eleventh

While Moses was on the top of Mount Sinai he had a vision of what the tabernacle ought to be to make it a proper place for the worship of Jehovah. No one else had seen the vision; and when Moses came down from the mount, he might no longer see it, but he could remember it, and he must be careful to copy it faithfully and patiently. . . When you have seen any such vision, you must remember it, so that you can patiently copy it. The difference between worthy and worthless men is not so much in the seeing as in the remembering.

April twelfth

Whatever visions have been granted us of higher Christian living, for some of our neighbors we shall have to be the pattern. Whether we like it or not, they will take their pattern from what they see in us.

April thirteenth

"Men and brethren, what shall we do? . . Ever since, I think, in times of deep conviction, when the experiences of the day of Pentecost are at all reproduced, it has been found needful to supplement the public preaching of the truth by some such personal questioning and directing, so that each darkened soul groping for the light may be personally touched and helped by some one who can see.

April fourteenth

Oh, that more of us would dedicate to the Lord, and always reserve for Him, that quiet upper chamber of our income, to which the disturbing question of good times and bad times is not admitted; meeting the claims of His cause first; not letting Him have what is left over, but rather reserving for ourselves what is left over.

April fifteenth

In the deafening babel of our modern world, do you not long to hear once more those sweet harmonies of Pentecost, the voice of that one Divine Interpreter?

April sixteenth

I suppose we cannot rightly pray for anything if we are sure that it is against God's will. To pray that the sun might rise in the west; or to pray for any pleasure or treasure that we feel to be wrong; or to expose ourselves to some needless peril from simple recklessness, and then pray that God will keep us safe! . . . But so long as we have not been shown God's will, it seems to me that we are entirely free to express any of our desires, and that our heavenly Father is pleased to have us express them constantly, until it becomes a habit of the soul to translate all our innocent desires into spoken or unspoken requests.

April seventeenth

One duty which we owe to each other in this world of many sorrows is consolation. Those who are crushed by disappointment or affliction need to be cheered and helped upon their feet again. And this ministry of helpfulness toward each other is committed to us all as part of our Christian duty.

April eighteenth

I have heard of a wise teacher who offered it to her pupils as the very best advice she had to give them, that "they should learn always to look pleasant." All the electrical inventions of the last fifty years could not do so much towards brightening and beautifying the streets and homes of our cities as the women and girls of those same cities could, if they would only form the habit of looking pleasant. "Let your light shine," the Lord said. "Look pleasant."

April nineteenth

In all our relations to the Lord there is a kind of mutual friendliness, a broad, human brotherhood; that is the wonder of this Christian religion. For He is really a King, and we were bowing low before Him. But He is not willing to stand off on His dignity; He is always lifting us up to His side, taking us by the right hand. He who did the choosing has chosen us to be His friends.

April twentieth

"I was in the spirit," says John, "on the Lord's day." I need not say that the Lord's day, or first day of the week, has come to be our holy time. This day, emptied of work, gives us a chance to get into the spirit. If you do not succeed in doing it to-day, you may be very sure you will not to-morrow. We all need to get into the spirit, if the nobler part of our manhood is not to be crushed by the weight of the flesh.

April twenty-first

It is the one distinguishing mark of Christian faith everywhere that it brings the sense of pardon for sin. Among all the varieties of creed and worship in different parts of the church, eastern and western, Catholic and Protestant, ancient and modern, that one mark has never been altogether lost sight of. The Gospel promises to set guilty men right with God, and those who accept it feel that it has kept its promise.

April twenty-second

Christ is the pattern for manhood; Christ, God's dear Son, who showed the beauty and the greatness of service by giving His own life for the world. Some day the whole fabric of human society will be built over on those lines; and then it will become the true Temple of God. The work goes forward now, but very slowly, because so often men have lost sight of the pattern.

April twenty-third

When the Holy City is described to us in the Revelation as the home of the blessed, the last touch in the description is that there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie. The whole teaching of Scripture is that our God is one whose "truth endureth to all generations," and that His servant must hate any false way.

April twenty-fourth

There is a tremendous, positive reality about an intense effort of the spirit. It means the higher nature of the man struggling for truth and sincerity. Or, rather, as in the old story of the Patriarch, when the angel of God wrestled with the man, so this is God struggling in the man to lift his manhood to the heights of communion and vision. The Father is seeking such to worship Him.

April twenty-fifth

I think we can lay this down as one of the fundamental rules for prayer, according to Christ's teaching: that any child of God, coming to his Father in the spirit of childlike trust and obedience, may ask boldly for anything he thinks he wants; for whatever ignorant blunders he makes in his asking, he can feel sure that his Father will correct them in His wise answering.

April twenty-sixth

Nearly all the best comfort in this sorrowing world comes from those who themselves have sorrowed heavily and have been comforted; indeed the best of all comes from those who are sorrowing now and yet are comforted.

April twenty-seventh

That which costs is also that which well repays the cost. So it is doubtless true, as a distinguished writer of our day has said, that "the old masters painted for joy and knew not that virtue had gone out of them;" while, on the other hand, the first great master of Christian song also said truly of his greatest poem, that it had "made him lean for many years."

The Christian rule for us all in our daily occupation is to do every piece of work not merely so that it will look well done, but so that it will be well done. For we are God's servants, and God sees things, not as they seem to be, but as they are.

April twenty-eighth

When we have tasted and seen how good the Lord is, we shall always be looking to see how we can do something more for someone else.

April twenty-ninth

A great responsibility has been laid upon any man who has been taken up into the Mount of God's confidence and shown any of those visions which are hidden from the eyes of his fellow men. . . . And if any man, woman or child of our day has ever seen any part of the heavenly vision, any gleam of that light that is shining always from the face of Jesus Christ—that wonder and patience of His pardon toward us; that tenderness of His sympathy; that glory of His sacrifice for the world—if we know anything of it for ourselves, when we come down from the mountain you may be sure that others will be looking at us, and will see that we have been with Him.

April thirtieth

It is easier to be a good Samaritan than to be an equally good priest. It is easier to share your oil and your beast and your money with men than to share God's salvation.

May first

Paul proved himself one of the very greatest of men, in the books that he wrote; in the institutions that he shaped; in the ruling thought that he introduced among men; in the strength of his positive influence over other souls; in the scope of his work; in his heroic endurance of suffering. By any test of greatness in genius and character and achievement he stands in the highest rank. And yet his one greatest service to the world was to be converted; to yield his soul as sincerely and completely as he did to the constraining power of the love of Jesus Christ.

May second

I suppose if we could see the whole we should know any true service faithfully rendered is a preparation for something larger, sometime.

May third

God's justice is as far beyond our reach as His wisdom or power. But speak of His kindness, and there is something we can copy.

May fourth

You had fallen into some heavy bereavement—the darkness of some cruel loss; and you had been crying to the Lord for comfort or help, and complaining that the prayer was not heard. And all the while in the gloomy pre-occupation of your own sorrow you heeded not the fact of the great procession passing your door; one and another pausing there a moment, still sadder and lonelier than you, waiting for some word of cheer from you. If you could have aroused yourself from your own grief to bid even one of them come in, I believe the Lord might have gladly come in with him to cheer your soul with His great consolation.

May fifth

A man's own home, or a woman's, if used hospitably up to the limits of its capacity for the benefit of those who would profit most by its protection and cheer, may be the most effective of all instruments of Christian service. And if this refuge is not big enough for all who are wandering friendless in the dark —and I am afraid it never is—we must long to provide it. . . It is a great task laid upon our Christian helpfulness, to make provision somehow, so that we can say to everyone, every stranger, who might ever pass the door, "Stay friend; abide, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent."

May sixth

Your best beginning at serving Christ is to go straight back to your shop, and first let your fellow workmen there know who your Master is.

May seventh

If Jesus Christ was more generously social than any other socialist, He was also more intensely individualistic than any other individualist. While others were content with the ninety and nine, He was always looking out for the one.

May eighth

When men are choosing a new home they will take account of various considerations: the healthfulness of the place; the beauty of its situation; the prospects of making money in it. And those points sometimes deserve thought. But, after all, your choice of a home can hardly be called a happy one in the highest sense unless it gives you the acquaintance of some of the men and women whom you ought to know. Men and women are the precious commodity in this world, and no life can be counted rich if they are left out.

May ninth

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." That is the motive that has been found strong enough to change human hearts; the motive that has been slowly changing even the great sluggish world itself, as if to give promise that sometime it will swing the whole wandering planet back into its proper course. The motive power of it all is the Divine love of One who gave His life for sinful man.

May tenth

The will of Jesus is not hidden from us; and the heart of the world begins to understand that all our own highest dreams of freedom, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, human blessedness, are included in what Jesus willed for His fellows.

May eleventh

No word in the language carries a sense of more bitter desolation than the word "homesick." No song has been more or more feelingly sung than that which says, "There is no place like home." We used to venture out sometimes for short excursions into the great, strange world, eager for new sights and sounds, but after a little, especially when the evening shadows began to lengthen, we always hurried home. That was the only place where we could rest, where we could stay, where we found that we belonged. It must be that this almost universal instinct was designed for some good purpose.

May twelfth

When we are tempted to impatience toward those whom we call the ignorant, let us remember that we ourselves do not yet know quite everything.

May thirteenth

The moment you begin to render any of the Christian services freely, because you love to do it; because His loving service for you has made you love Him, so that now you outrun the constraint in your desire to please Him, . . have you not sometimes found the King, Himself, your fellow-traveller?

May fourteenth

If our character is to be solid enough to bear examination it must be like that stone which the prophet spoke of cut out of the eternal hills, without hands; not a human artifice, but God's own work, God's gift. The true art in the making of manhood is to put yourself in God's hands and let Him make you. Everything else is an artifice, more or less of a sham.

May fifteenth

Sometimes the way to prove that you are not ashamed of Christ will be to show that you are not ashamed of some persecuted servant of His.

May sixteenth

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." That seems to refer not so much to legal debts, but to all the manifold acts of helpful service that we might be able to render to those in any kind of trouble or need. I am sure that most of us intend to render such services sometimes. Any story of distress moves us. We feel the taint of pity. But are you not afraid that you have sometimes delayed to help until the right time for helping was past? "He gives twice who gives quickly" is the proverb, and a vast amount of painful experience lies back of it.

May seventeenth

Kindness is the very essence of good manners, and selfishness the very essence of bad manners.

May eighteenth

In this wonderful world which God has made, has He ever made anything more wonderful than the human countenance? Think of the infinite variety of it. Of all the hundreds of millions of people who make up the world's population, is there a single one whom you will be in danger of mistaking for your friend? . . Think of the beauty of it; all other varied forms of loveliness in mountain, valley, flowers, sea, sky—are they so entrancing as the beauty of man or woman? . . Truly the same God who first commanded the light to shine out of darkness must be the same God who moulded the clay into this illuminating face of man.

May nineteenth

The visible world about us is so terribly engrossing; its business, its pleasures, its promised rewards, are so apt to fill our thoughts, that some of us will find it hard to remember things unseen. . . It is a great help to have some definite time when you shall think of God, and some definite place where you shall think of Him; a part of the fixed program of your life, as invariable as the hour of your breakfast, or the street and number of your place of business.

May twentieth

In any time of victory for any good cause you have it in your power to rob the victory of its perfect sweetness for the Lord Himself by just keeping still when He expected you to rejoice with Him.

May twenty-first

God's providence has opened for us many prison doors, We live in a free land, so far as external restraints are concerned. We may go where we choose, and do and be what we will. But we must ask Him to make us and our children fit for this dangerous liberty.

May twenty-second

It often seems to me that the road to Jericho has been full of two sorts of people: priests and scribes who had read God's law but would not touch the wounded man; Samaritans who were sorry for the wounded man and were willing to touch him, but could not give him the best kind of help, because they had never learned to read God's law. What we need is that the Jericho road shall be filled with true Christians, who can both read the law and touch the man, so as to bring his need and this Divine help together.

May twenty-third

Jesus knew so well that He was the Child of God, and that His Father was never far away from Him. Everything He saw in the world used to make Him think of His Father;—the flowers, the birds, the waving fields of grain, the rains that fertilize the earth, the shining of the sun, the tumultous day, the silence of the night, the trembling sea, the solid land, the solitude of the wilderness, the crowded market place. This Child of God found His Father in all these things.

May twenty-fourth

They may come from different quarters but it is the same Temple. The New Jerusalem opens its gates on every side, east, north, south, west, that whosoever comes may, if he will, walk straight forward into the city.

May twenty-fifth

"As ye go, preach," said Christ to the twelve whom he had chosen. "As ye go;" and it would be a good motto for every traveller who calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ. "As ye go, preach." Have some good message from Him that you can deliver by word or deed to anyone who ought to hear it from you.

May twenty-sixth

God's will for this world is for a dominion of perfect fairness and kindliness and peace, such as the prophets and Psalmist looked for. Even the most helpless and friendless of men shall be tenderly cared for, and shall be sure to get their rights at last. That kingdom here on earth is God's will, and anyone who selfishly sets himself against that blessed and righteous consummation, whether he be king, or priest, or pastor, is not the servant of God, but His enemy.

May twenty-seventh

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." The law is that getting and giving belong together. Properly speaking they are only two sides of the one transaction. Sometimes the one may come first, and sometimes the other, but wherever either is found the other ought to appear in close connection with it. Sometimes you ought to give out before you can hope to receive, and sometimes you are bound to give out after you have received; but always and everywhere, either before or after, if you are receiving much from God's bounty, much is required of you.

May twenty-eighth

You may be a very busy Christian with a great deal of work to do in the world, but you can well afford time enough to keep fresh in your mind the memory of your own unworthiness.

May twenty-ninth

"The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." Ask the careless multitudes who are forgetting God to-day whether they have obeyed that—ask your own heart with fear and trembling how fully you have obeyed it.

May thirtieth—Decoration Day

In the darkest and stormiest days that have dawned on this world there have always been some few heroic souls who could believe, even if they could not see, that the sun was still shining in calm majesty above the clouds; that in spite of all darkness and tempest God was still on the Throne. And this confidence has made men and women strong to do great things and to bear great things.

May thirty-first

Some day we shall understand that many of the things that in the past have divided the church into parties and sects —because the people, as God made them, are so different; because one man likes to read his prayers out of a book, and another to speak them directly out of his own thought; because one enjoys the freedom of a class meeting and another the stately order of the cathedral; and because one with Calvin bows before the sovereignty of God, and another with Wesley squarely faces the moral accountability of man; because one has a taste for the long locks and courtly manners of a Cavalier and another for the cropped pate of a Round Head, or the plain dress of a Friend—are reasons why it must by all means be held together. Shall the oak find fault with the pine because no amount of compulsion can bring them to the same form and color? God has made them both very good.

June first

The beauty and the power of true love have always been in the self-surrender of it—true love of every kind, whether of parent for child, of brother for brother, of friend for friend, but, most of all, that true love of the lovers which has kept the old earth singing through the years.

June second

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." That was the command, and it was very good. For to love your neighbor, this is the right beginning of this whole great duty of love. . . Begin with your neighbor, the person nearest to you, mother, father, brother, sister, wife, child, servant, the person next door or over the way. Your fellow-citizen: the person who has been put nearest you; whoever it is, begin your loving with him. That is the Bible order of loving, and it is the only proper order; for if you should skip the beginning, you will never be able to learn what comes after.

June third

The courtesy of a true gentleman is the beautiful outer clothing of a strong body made up of unyielding principles of truth and right.

June fourth

As often as I think what Christianity was while Jesus Christ was still living upon the earth, when only the one little land of Palestine found any advantage from His coming, and in that one little land only a few of the towns, and only very few of the homes could even enjoy His presence; and contrast that time with ours when, all over the world, in every land, in every city and every hamlet, in every home, all who love Christ's name may, and very many do, rejoice in the sense that He never forsakes them; that He always listens to them, guides them, preserves them, cherishes them, forgives them, strengthens them,—it comes over me how large a promise this is: "I am with you all the days."

June fifth

It was not the noise and confusion and excitement of the tongues that made Pentecost glorious; those were a kind of accident, not the substance of the Spirit's work that day. 'The gift of tongues,' Paul says—'why, though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels—if that is all of it—I am become as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.' That does not prove that one has been greatly blessed. . . What does prove it then? Read that wonderful thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and you will find out. It is charity—love.

June sixth

A lie has often been compared to the stone one loosens upon the mountain side; once started it is beyond his reach, and in its quick descent soon grows into the destructive avalanche.

June seventh

Let us be very careful to keep the first day of the week for its highest uses. Our fathers gave it to us. . . An institution of this sort is precious, but it is fragile. It took thousands of years in the building; you can destroy it in a generation.

June eighth

The question comes up whether you shall take your young children with you regularly to church on Sunday; there often seems so little to interest them. . . I am sorry for any child whose parents have not furnished him by example and authority with this most salutary habit of going to God's house on His day always, whether he expects much or little; for you cannot tell whether shall prosper either this service or that; and so the way to make sure of your share of the blessings of God's house is to be there at all seasons.

June ninth

Earthly lovers and friends must die and leave us sometime, and, even if they did not, they cannot fully satisfy our hunger for sympathy, for the nearest and dearest of them only know us in part. . . . And so in all ages the human heart has been growing hungry for some larger, completer, surer love than this; one that would encompass us altogether, and never fail; a God, who will care for us.

June tenth

The ideal of a church of Christ must be that in it all races and conditions of men should be assured of their common brotherhood, as children of one Father and redeemed by one Savior.

June eleventh

I confidently believe that many of us may find in the chance encounters of each day wonderful opportunities for telling men and women of Jesus Christ.

June twelfth

We all need to learn, and the earlier the better, that some things must not be determined for us by the pleasure of other people. "Be just before you are generous," says the proverb, and so we might say, "Be true before you are courteous." To give pleasure to your neighbors is a good thing in itself, or to avoid giving them pain, but if this good thing has to be attained through any sacrifice of your own truth, through any betrayal of your own convictions, that is too high a price.

June thirteenth

Every believer's life ought to be a victorious life; victorious over temptation, for life is a fight against temptation. Every believer in Jesus must know that life is a fight for personal character. It is very hard, and yet, if you will believe in Jesus, you have to believe that victory can be won; that He won it, and that by His help you can win it.

June fourteenth

What difference can it make to God whether we love Him or not? He is so great and there are so many of us. . . "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," is the first great commandment of the law. . . . He cares so much about it that if any single child of His fails to love Him, He misses and longs for the affection of that one child. Incredible or not, that is the Gospel.

June fifteenth

The grandest occupation yet discovered is to help some one else toward the truth which one has seen; to help some one else toward the goodness which one has practised and enjoyed; to help some one else toward the Saviour by whom one has himself been saved. . . And so we find that missionary work, whether at home or abroad, is the great Christian occupation. By word and deed the faithful Christian is constantly saying to brother and neighbor and all: "Come, hear, see, know, love, trust, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

June sixteenth

It is startling to think what might come of it if our ambitious requests should always be granted according to our foolish wording of them.

June seventeenth

We have to avail ourselves of social machinery. Our very charity is no longer from hand to hand, but most of it through great societies. So our work of the evangelization of the world. . . But let us take the more pains to remember that, after all, men are not mere indistinguishable atoms of society to be dealt with by the wholesale. They remain, as they always have been, separate living souls, to be saved, if they ever are saved, one by one, by somebody's separate attention.

June eighteenth

The one great question for every man is, Has the comforting and protecting presence of God come into his life, or not?—so that in all times, whether of solitude or companionship, strength or weakness, in the light or in the dark, the man can lift up his face and say, as Jesus used to say, "Father," and be sure he is heard.

June nineteenth

"When thou art converted strengthen thy brother," Christ said to Peter; and how well the man did it. What a tower of strength that man was to the little church in Jerusalem, and to all trembling sinners, who were looking for salvation! . . And if any of us can be really converted, and turned with all our hearts into the service of Christ, the same thing will be true for us, I believe. We cannot keep the results of it to ourselves. Those about us will have to get some of the benefit.

June twentieth

There is a whole great world above us of holiness and beauty, and truth and self-sacrifice, which often I cannot see, but which I am sure is of all worlds the best worth seeing, and the hush of the holy Sabbath gives me my best opportunity to make an acquaintance with it.

June twenty-first

There is such a different tone in the earnest hopefulness of Jesus Christ for men, from that comfortable selfishness of one who is simply unwilling to be disturbed with thoughts of his sin and peril, and who calls this "hoping for the best." May Jesus Christ give us His own patient and unconquerable hopefulness towards all the nations of men!

June twenty-second

These earthly sanctuaries make us always think of the heavenly sanctuary. For heaven means to us the place where God always abides; where His people shall always see His face. Heaven is the Father's house—His mansion; it is His home.

God is love," and a man or a church that abides in the spirit of love and the practice of loving service—you may be sure that God Himself abides in that church, or in the heart of that man.

June twenty-third

The Creator has filled us with innumerable and insatiable appetites. If we should ever get them all satisfied it would mean that the time had come for life to end, and the wheels to stop. So long as we have a right to live, every soul of us (if we knew enough to speak the truth) must say: "I am an hungered—give me to eat."

June twenty-fourth

Paul recommends to Timothy to learn to think of himself and God as mutually trusting each other. I have to trust him for all sorts of benefits present and future, and my only hope is His faithfulness to me. But at the same time, and in connection with the same interests, He is trusting me. I want God to keep faith with me and I must learn how to keep faith with God.

June twenty-fifth

Unless the flesh is to conquer and spiritual religion to vanish from the earth, earnest men and women will have to go on denying themselves a great number of fleshly indulgences and inclinations. Some of them for your own sake, because they war against your soul and hinder your spiritual progress. Some of them for your neighbor's sake, because they would cause him to stumble and weaken your influence with him. Some of them for your Lord's sake, because they would interrupt in some way your service of Him.

June twenty-sixth

If you willfully shut any Christian away from your sympathy, you are shutting up one window of your soul, excluding from yourself some part of the knowledge of Christ's infinite goodness.

June twenty-seventh

The kind of knowledge of God that our Christian religion offers to us all is, not of a distant being whom we can reason about, but of a friend dear and near whom we can know; a Father in heaven in whose daily care we can trust. Through Jesus Christ, God has become personal in human life.

June twenty-eighth

A man who is in the habit of boasting to himself that he is fully as good as he ought to be; who has no sense of shortcoming and ill-desert; no humble penitence, does not come up to the mark; he lacks one of the requisites. He may be scrupulous to pay his debts; he may be charitable in an easy, goodnatured fashion; but there is a kind of sweetness and beauty of soul you do not find in that man, and which he will never gain until someone teaches him the grace of humble penitence.

June twenty-ninth

I can imagine that those men who had enjoyed the Lord's friendship, when He was upon the earth, would have often grown eloquent afterwards in telling others how good a friend He was, and in how many ways His friendship had been delightful to them. They might speak of the charm of His manner, the power of His eloquence, the healing of His touch, the depth of His insight, the breadth of His sympathy; all the qualities that made His friendship sweet and attractive; but it seems to me the one quality in this friendship they would love best to describe would be its *constancy.*

June thirtieth

If I had to give up all the rest of the Gospel and keep just one parable, I think I should choose the parable of the Prodigal son.

July first

You cannot get away from your Father's house by traveling away from what men call your home. No matter where you go, you have not escaped His oversight, or the binding force of the rules that He has established for the guidance of His children.

July second

Men are what we want. Not mere depositories of information—your library is that; or calculating or investigating machines—your laboratory is that; but men who have really come to themselves; who have been lifted out of the disorganized mass of commonplace humanity; who have some personal conviction and personal character, and, therefore, in the long campaign of light against darkness, order against chaos, right against wrong, heaven against hell, can exert some personal force for determining events.

July third

No nation will ever be fit to govern itself freely except as its citizens are severally learning how to obey God. We as freemen are not fit to make laws for each other until we ourselves have some sense of the sacred authority of the law of righteousness itself as established by God.

July fourth—Independence Day

The Bible teaches us that the state has a Divine sacredness of its own as truly as a church; that God concerns Himself with the doings of Cyrus or Cæsar as truly as with the doings of Aaron or Caiaphas. Therefore to a Christian man every patriotic service which he is able to render becomes a most sacred part of his obedience to his Lord. And so, when he looks upon the strong bonds of law and justice which hold the whole fabric of the nation together, however they may appear to others, his faith enables him to see in them God's own handiwork.

July fifth

True loyalty has never meant blind obedience to any human decrees. The truest loyalist has always been a man who could show, on occasion, that he was not afraid of the king's commandment. To one only can we bow with unqualified allegiance. We can to Him; we must to Him—the King, whose right it is to reign; the King, who is most kingly, the true representative of all His people, the highest and the lowliest.

July sixth

The greatest of all landmarks of time, most venerable with age, most significant with accumulating associations, is the weekly day of rest and prayer; the one day of seven saved from the bondage of toil and dedicated to the glorious liberty of the children of God.

July seventh

We have found the second mile a peculiarly pleasant subject of meditation: that second mile where you have pressed on beyond the region of hard compulsion, and are rendering your service, whatever it be, with a willing heart and gladly. That is the best mile to travel. We find it so in every relation of life, as parents and children, masters and servants, buyers and sellers, friends and lovers; when the ready performance has outrun the irksome obligation, then it becomes free and glad.

July eighth

Just so far as we can satisfy ourselves that we are now in the work He intends for us, we have a right to believe that we shall carry it through successfully.

July ninth

"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Not the amount of work done, but the willingness, readiness, to do it, determines how acceptable it shall be in God's eyes. . . He rates men in their various studies, trades and professions, I am very sure, not according to the profits they have been able to draw out, but according to the honest work they have been willing to put in.

July tenth

"Thou gavest also the good spirit to instruct them and withholdest not thy manna from their mouth." You have all your favorite texts which have taught you so much, and have grown so dear to you that you like to turn them over and over again for further help and instruction. Among them I am disposed to count this beautiful saying about the wandering of the Children of Israel in the wilderness.

July eleventh

The prayer that our Lord has taught us is not that God's will may be done in heaven, but that God's will may be done "in earth as in Heaven;" and that His "Kingdom may come" in earth as in heaven. . . And friends, this is what we must believe—this kingdom of heaven on earth. Until we do, we shall never know the sweetness and glory and power of the Christian faith.

July twelfth

The spirit first, then the bread. I like to work this Christian chronology into so simple a matter as the order of events at my dinner-table. I am sure the bread tastes better, and strengthens and refreshes me more, if I can speak some word in the spirit of thanks to God first.

July thirteenth

The whole religion of Jesus Christ is the one supreme and eternal embodiment of absolute unselfishness.

July fourteenth

We must root ourselves more deeply, for we need roots. Whatever good thing God may have for us in the future will grow somehow out of the present, and our present is rooted in the past. All history teaches that a man is no safe guide for the future, unless he knows how to study and venerate the past: he can have no discernment for God's leadings in the future, unless he can see, and loves to see, the steps by which God has been leading us and our fathers in the past. Such a man is rooted, and will not be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

July fifteenth

When we have learned from Jesus, there will be no time left to worry that so little has been done for us, for we shall be always wondering how we can do more for someone else. When we have learned from Jesus, it will seem to us that the choicest opportunity of all is that of doing a kindness or a service for some neighbor.

July sixteenth

The Holy City, whether in heaven or on earth, stands for the grand consummation of all things; the reward for all the labors of God's saints; the end of all their hopes and desires; the final answer to all their prayers. It is John's emblem for that one, far-off, Divine event to which creation moves.

July seventeenth

Our Lord, foreseeing His own death, bade His disciples take up each a cross and carry it after Him. If any Christian in becoming thoroughly Christlike seems without this burden, be sure that it is because he has learned so willingly to bear his cross—not because it has been lifted from his shoulders.

July eighteenth

To win a faith in God will mean hard working sometimes, and hard fighting sometimes, and hard fighting and much patient enduring. That is the way other men have learned; it is the way your father learned to believe and pray. And every year will give you plentiful opportunities—every day of every year is full of them—for driving back cruel, insolent doubts, and winning a faith that shall be yours to keep forever.

July nineteenth

There is always a kind of pain in depriving ourselves of some good thing that we might have kept. Even the gift you offer to one you love dearly, and which fills your own heart with generous delight, costs you something; else it is no gift of yours; and that cost means pain.

July twentieth

It is seldom that our brotherly affection is strong enough of itself to bring us into full sympathy with those who are deeply afflicted. Therefore some past affliction of one's own is needed, commonly, to open his heart wide to the sorrows of another. So it is that deep personal sorrow is often the price which those have paid who are able to minister most helpfully to others.

July twenty-first

The Christian religion has furnished us with words, a large stock of them; common words, that do not look as if they had their Sunday clothes on, and do not sound as if they belonged only in church; common words, such as the whole world understands, and any man might speak naturally anywhere. Among the best of them are these: "Be ye kind."

July twenty-second

The gentleman of to-day, if he be really worthy of the name, will not feel the impulse to draw his robes more closely about him when he chances to come into the presence of someone lowlier born than himself, for he finds no better use of that courtesy of his—that costly product of so many centuries of social evolution—than to make it set him most quickly on a social level with everyone whom he meets in the great brotherhood of mankind.

July twenty-third

What shall one say of the human creature who never lifts his hand—does no stroke of useful work from his cradle to his grave—because of the oppressive memory of some good thing that his father did. If he could only forget! Have you not always liked that answer of Napoleon's marshal, when one of the aristocratic courtiers of Austria asked about his ancestor? "We have none," he answered proudly; "*we* are the ancestors."

July twenty-fourth

A man who openly carries with him the name of Jesus Christ escapes almost altogether a good many of the common forms of temptation. People do not offer them to him. They know that it would be of no use; often they are a little ashamed to do it.

July twenty-fifth

Reverence involves a confession of something above you, and also your habitual adjustment of yourself to it.

July twenty-sixth

"The length, the breadth, the depth, the height," that seems the proper measure for love. There's a wideness in it like the wideness of the sea. And yet it remains true that in some respects the way of true love must be a narrow way. In the most sacred ordinance of human love, have we not often listened to that solemn and most exclusive mutual vow, "forsaking all others keep thee only unto her;" "forsaking all others keep thee only unto him?" It is a narrow path which allows no shadow of deviation, just because it is a path of truest love. Need we wonder then, if the love which a disciple owes his Lord should show the same unyielding exclusiveness?

July twenty-seventh

If there should be anyone . . . who cannot be converted and become as a little child at least once or twice in a year, he may as well go out of the church at once; for we are told that with such a temper of heart he can by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

July twenty-eighth

We are on trial, all of us; all our lives long we are on trial. Other people are passing judgment upon us for all that we do, or leave undone; for all that we say, or leave unsaid. Some of our neighbors accuse us, probably, and some excuse, and some approve. . . A man must be content to be condemned by many about him and appeal his case to the highest court he knows of. . . To which Cæsar will he appeal?

July twenty-ninth

Learn to make your yea mean yea, and your nay mean nay; and as soon as people learn that you are that sort of a talker, they will be glad to listen to you without need of any startling exaggeration, and to believe you without need of any oath. . . Christ's rule may sound like a commonplace, but it works; it is the practical way of making a start towards ridding the world of this curse of falsehood.

July thirtieth

The birth of Jesus brought into the world an influence for peace and good will which must as certainly overcome all the forces of human selfishness and hatred and wrong as the returning sun will conquer the winter's cold.

July thirty-first

The world is hungry for justice, and sometimes even now you may hear the angry, inarticulate muttering of that fierce appetite. We are hungry for honor and truth and beauty and faith; for the reconciling of quarrels, and the forgiveness of injuries, and neighborly kindnesses; and for love—a very little of that goes further than all the loaves that money would buy. We are hungry for love; and God is Love.

August first

"He hath made us Kings;" oh! let us earnestly beseech Him to qualify us for the high office so that we may fill it worthily.

August second

Our Lord's words urge upon us a very careful reverence. "He that sweareth by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein; he that sweareth by heaven sweareth by the throne of God and by Him that dwelleth thereon." I wish we might all take these words to heart as they bear upon the reverence or irreverence of our own habits of daily speech. . . Some of us, who would never willingly take the name of the Lord in vain, do seem inclined to come as near as we well can to such an offense without actually committing it. We are inclined to emphasize our speech with exclamations that, while they are not exactly curses, yet sound so much like them that they serve very nearly the same purpose in our conversation.

August third

You ought to make the most of that incalculable blessing, the safe and restful quiet of your own home at evening. The memory of past storms must not disturb it. The apprehension of to-morrow's storms need not disturb it. A day at a time is the sailor's rule. "Take no thought for the morrow." "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "Be glad because you are quiet." Do not be afraid to indulge your gladness to the full when you have been brought to so desirable a haven. Many a man who wears out, and breaks down, and goes to pieces, long before the proper time, might have held on bravely and kept on to the end of the voyage, if only he had been wise enough to have availed himself of the comforts of this safe harbor, which God was offering him every evening, at home.

August fourth

Loving men is the scriptural rule for knowing God.

August fifth

Human gladness is not manufactured by the wholesale. "Little deeds of kindness, little words of love," are what "make this world an Eden, like the Heaven above;" but you must be quick to say those words, and must do those deeds in time.

August sixth

I am glad that the Lord has set us, for our constant daily copying, an example of a sort of good will which rises above all our moral differences and discriminations; a good will that leaves nobody out, saint or sinner. Christ encourages you to try to live your life in such a temper that all hearts will be a little kinder because of your kindness; all other lives, good or bad, a little brighter because of this light that has been shining upon them impartially from you.

August seventh

If you are the children of the Father in heaven, you will have to learn to do your loving like God's rain and sunshine. Not loving your neighbors only, for even the publicans do that. But you must get this diviner quality of God's own sunshine into your loving: the sun that shines on the evil and on the good alike; and of the rain that falls in gentle benediction on the fields of the just and of the unjust alike.

August eighth

If there is any cross that our sin has nailed us to, on the cross that stands closest to ours we see Jesus! His mission is to separate us from all that is bad in us, and that is why He has come so near. He comes nearer to me than my own sin; He comes between it and me.

August ninth

There are two worlds in which men live; a world of rigid retribution, where every debt will be exacted to the last farthing, and another world of mercy, forbearance, forgiveness; and we men can have our choice which world we shall live in, but we cannot live in both. We cannot be taking forgiveness from God and at the same time refusing forgiveness to men.

August tenth

It would rule out so much censoriousness and uncharitableness; it would prevent so many misunderstandings; it would forbid so many quarrels between nations and men; it would bless human life everywhere with such beautiful courtesy, if we could let Jesus Christ teach us all His lesson of compassion.

August eleventh

Sometimes the answers to our prayers are at the threshold before we are willing to let them in. May the Lord increase our faith. May He show us that the Divine time is now, and the Divine place is here; that this present world of ours is the great miracle; that God is among us, God in Christ, now reconciling the world unto Himself.

August twelfth

The great burden of the world's guilt is not made up of its sins of commission; not at all. Those are bad enough, but at the worst they are occasional and often accidental. But it is these lifelong, uninterrupted sins of omission that have been heaping up that intolerable burden which only the infinite goodness of God can ever forgive.

August thirteenth

What the Gospel encourages us to believe as Christians is that you and I, as well as Peter and John, may have a share in God's own blessed work of peopling his heaven, not with helpless cripples, as if heaven were a hospital for incurables, and the church an ambulance for gathering them up and carrying them there; not that; but in God's work of peopling heaven with true servants and soldiers of Jesus, men and women who may have been helpless once through their sin, but who have now been redeemed, healed, made strong to bear hardness and endure temptation, and run their race with patience.

August fourteenth

Here you have found yourself called to do something for your Master; that is to say, something that evidently needs to be done for Him, and it was you who discovered the need? That discovery by you constitutes your call.

August fifteenth

"Our neighbors; . . whether they know it or not, every one of them still bears upon him, however defaced, something of the Divine image and superscription. The stamp on the old coin was Cæsar's, but the stamp on the man is God's.

August sixteenth

What we need in every kind of Christian helpfulness is the element of personal human communication. No man must expect any other man or company of men to carry him into the Christian church and all the privileges of the Christian faith. It cannot be done. Some kind neighbor may help me to my feet, and show me the open door, and speak his words of encouragement and persuasion; but God has left it for me to make up my own mind to walk in.

August seventeenth

The men who are earnestly trying to be better are not the ones who care to spend much time over excuses. No one can have a worse opinion of their past than they themselves have. . . The reason why they are not crushed by the weight of past guilt is, that, so far as possible, they turn from the past altogether. Their hearts are fixed on better things for coming days.

August eighteenth

We must never degrade the musical part of worship by thinking of it as merely intending to give us pleasure, a contrivance of sweet sounds to please the ear. It is the very highest form, the most expressive form of our address to God, and of His gracious words to us.

August nineteenth

Quietness is good manners; it is good art; and it is also good religion. Quietness—the modesty of nature. If there must come public observation, notoriety, it ought to come by the necessities of one's work.

August twentieth

Our danger is always that, like the Israelites of old, we will not enter into our promised land because of unbelief. And one common and ruinous form of unbelief is that which credits no utterance of God, unless it be nineteen hundred years old; which accepts the supernatural only as a far-off fact; which has no knowledge of a Word of God nigh, even in the mouth and heart; which cannot believe in a God now with us, acting by His Almighty power, speaking from His infinite wisdom, here, in our midst.

August twenty-first

It is often a painful responsibility to take our turn at leading, when we have been used to follow. We might not always be ready, even when the full time had come, to take this responsibility upon ourselves; and, so, do we not often observe how Providence, with stern kindness, forces the duty upon us? . . Sooner or later, I think, it is intended that every human being should walk relying directly upon God Himself; all other props, all other guides, being put aside.

August twenty-second

He was called a man of sorrows. We are told how He wept and not how He laughed; and yet the word which must be joined eternally to the name of Jesus Christ is not sorrow, but joy; not disappointment, but infinite satisfaction.

August twenty-third

When a plain man named Martin Luther ventured to take God at His word, believing that he through faith in Christ might come straight to his heavenly Father and confess his sin, and know that he was forgiven, that seemed altogether incredible. It was hard to get anyone to accept so simple and human and natural a truth. But so fast as men did accept this simple human truth, it meant that most tremendous religious revival which we call the Protestant Reformation, and it was a faith strong enough to shake the whole world.

August twenty-fourth

The Giver of all good gifts is very generous and He is very rich; and His soul will be grieved if He sees only the poorer and cheaper benefits accepted.

August twenty-fifth

"The ways of Wisdom are pleasantness and her paths are peace." It is not always an easy road to start in, or to walk in; it is often up-hill work—there is no doubt about that—but it leads into a pleasant country. And even the path itself grow pleasanter and pleasanter, the further it leads you into that pleasant country.

August twenty-sixth

A Christian's great business in this world is not to get or to keep, but to give. That is the rule, and everything else is exception. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich;" and it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master. The emblem of Christian blessedness is not the whirlpool, always sucking in and always empty, but the spring, always giving out and always full.

August twenty-seventh

Can we not find a cheering, serviceable, workday, everyday example in the earlier years of Jesus? Three years of public ministry in the eyes of the world, but twelve quiet years of childhood, eighteen quiet years of youth and early manhood, in little Nazareth, only known as "the son of Joseph the carpenter."

August twenty-eighth

It seems to me the highest ideal of Christian worship must be when they all come together, the bond and the free, the subject and the king, the poor and the rich, the small and the great, and all take in what they can from the common message of good news, and all give out what they can to the common response of gratitude and praise.

August twenty-ninth

Christianity stands upon the earth; it is not "up in the air" as the saying is. With all its glorious visions of the New Jerusalem, it does not forget that a living man will need bread to eat. "Moral ideas rule the world," Emerson said somewhere, "but at close range the senses are imperious." Christianity remembers that, and knows how to deal with life at close range.

August thirtieth

The Bible has not so much to say of God's love for souls as of His love for men; His love for a man; the whole of him, body, soul and spirit. . . He counts the very hairs of your head; He looks after every part of you with a jealous care, not willing that any part of your value shall be lost.

August thirty-first

Jesus, whatever else He may have been, was through and through the most thoroughly human man that ever lived; took up into Himself most completely our human nature. That was in part the reason why He made so deep an impression on the men of His generation, and also why His influence has continued and increased in the world ever since. Other men touch us at a few points; He touches us everywhere. We cannot get away from Him. All the social and political questions of our day, even more than those of His day, are pervaded by His human presence and await His deep human decision. It is from this solid basis of humanity, believing Jesus the truest man that ever lived—the one altogether true man that ever lived—that one's faith may rise to the view of the God manifested in Him.

September first

Some of us have been apt to think that our service of God must always be some kind of action—doing; and the hand is the instrument of service. At other times we are apt to think that the service of God must be some kind of speaking—noisy talking or singing; and the tongue seems the chief instrument of service. But there are times when the most acceptable service of God will be listening; not doing, and certainly not speaking, but listening; and then the instrument of service will be the ear. It is to be noted that the Creator gave us two ears and only one tongue, as if to show us which kind of service He would have us render more constantly. And the Scripture says to us in plain terms: "Let a man be swift to hear, slow to speak."

September second

What a wonderful sign it is of God's wisdom and goodness—a little child!

September third

This common humanity, which knows how to pour oil and wine into bodily wounds, is more common than the Christian charity which knows how to bind up wounded spirits also.

The world about us is in sore need of good cheer, and if we have any on hand our neighbors ought to get the benefit of it.

September fourth

I always like the sentiment of the churchgoer of an earlier day who said that even from the dullest preaching he could get his profit, for then God Himself took up the text and preached a sermon on patience.

September fifth

We all profess to believe in the Holy Ghost. It is one article of our creed, and most of us find it easy to believe while we hold Him far enough away—far back in the past when God used to talk with men; or far forward in the future, in the last days, when God shall again talk with men. But to believe in the Spirit of God as an ever-present fact, here, now, speaking into your heart and into mine; with no need of angels, but God Himself dealing directly with a plain man like me; whenever men begin to believe in the Holy Ghost in that fashion, it is the day of Pentecost over again, and the power comes upon them.

September sixth

In all the beauty of visible form and audible sound we still remember the truest temple of God is a human heart.

September seventh

Gentle-man—take this term with all the richness of meaning that has ever been associated with it; the purity and truth, and courage and honor, and courtesy and self-sacrifice; and remember that the name belongs, first of all, to Jesus Christ.

September eighth

All other labor reforms put together are of less permanent value to the race than that one reform which was accomplished when Moses said: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy servant." Pleasure is innocent enough in itself, but it occupies a dangerous proximity to sinful selfishness. A Christian ought to have pleasure; he ought to be pleased often; but a man who spends his time pleasing himself, who seeks pleasure, has not yet received the mind of Christ; for "He pleased not Himself."

September ninth

What Samson teaches us by way of warning is that we must get something which he had not—some steadfast, ennobling service worthy of whatever strength God has given us. That is the safeguard against temptation. Delilah would have had little chance at the hero if he had had something to do. Laughter is to cheer a man in his work, not to take the place of his work. Games and sports are for the spare holiday, or for evening's refreshment when day's task is done; the long day itself is not a game or a joke.

September tenth

If God's spirit is still living and moving in the world, we expect changes and growth, and progress and new light breaking forth from His Word and from His works; and we want eyes to see them when they come.

September eleventh

All the common relations of daily life are claimed by the Lord who has bought us with a price to be His. In all the relations of daily life, He calls us to be saints. . . The office of a saint is very hard to fill. Real saintliness in business and social life is a difficult attainment, but we may go at it hopefully, remembering that it is God who has called us, each one of us, to be saints.

September twelfth

I tremble to think how God's ear has been wounded by the harsh chorus of profanity which has never ceased to insult Heaven since He first gave man tongue to speak. Yet perhaps the Father's ear is still more cruelly wounded by the strange conspiracy of silence which so often falls upon His children when we ought to be speaking His name.

September thirteenth

Any man who will honestly face the question of how much he owes to the Christian religion, and how he ought to pay the debt, is likely to find himself facing another question, deeper and more personal: "How much do I owe to Jesus Christ, and how ought I to pay that debt?"

September fourteenth

It is in the air—this impulse to rally. And for obvious reasons. The season of intense heat when men must rest and work more sluggishly has gone by and it is now time to study and work. It is as natural that people should rally more earnestly in all their enterprises every twelve months in the fall as they should wake up every twenty-four hours in the morning when daylight comes.

September fifteenth

The mere acquiring of knowledge is not the only purpose of education. We want also the development of character. Our schools must be turning out each year some fine product of manhood and womanhood; not merely a lot of calculating machines, or of repositories for historic and scientific facts, but fully-grown men and women. One main problem of education is how the acquiring of knowledge can be made to further this developing of character.

September sixteenth

If you have mixed up with your religion any private greed, or spite, impelling you to do this or that for your own sake, and call it for the Lord's sake, pray God to set that evil thing out alone in its native ugliness, where you may see it for what it is. It must not be covered with the sacred cloak.

September seventeenth

The great gifts of nature are poured out with an undiscriminating hand. We men attempt our various discriminations among ourselves with our cramped roofs and low fences, but think of such a Divine treasure as the sky, which roofs us all; that blue dome, as Emerson says, where romance and reality meet: the covering for the market and for the Cherubim and Seraphim—a miracle hurled into every beggar's hands. Even the unworthiest of the children cannot refuse that gift from the Father.

September eighteenth

I am afraid it is easier for most of us to believe in the most prodigious wonders of nineteen hundred years ago than in the simplest example of God's providential care for you and me and those whom we love; and yet this last is the really important and blessed faith.

September nineteenth

God forbid that any one whom you have called friend should ever have just cause to say to you, "You failed me in my time of temptation."

September twentieth

If your soul is worth more than the riches of the whole world, yours is not the only precious soul in the whole world. And if ever you learn to respect yourself and value yourself as you deserve, because of God's favor to you, you will learn to value your neighbors and respect them because of God's favor to them; not because this man happens to be witty, or that man learned or wealthy, or the next man famous, but because Christ shed His blood for all of them.

September twenty-first

It is a great safeguard against modern delusions to have some respectable acquaintance with what good people have said and thought before we came upon the scene.

September twenty-second

To harm your body willingly; to mutilate, or disfigure, or enfeeble it, is to commit a sort of outrage on the outer walls of the temple of God; and it shows disrespect to Him who deigned once to become flesh and dwell among us. It is as if a Jew had brought some kind of pollution into the courts round about the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. But to harm your mind; to mutilate, or disfigure, or enfeeble that willingly; to debase it to unworthy aims; to defile your memory and imagination with unclean thoughts—it is like taking some abominable thing into the very Holy of Holies. The profanest Jew might well shrink from such sacrilege as that.

September twenty-third

Let us pray God to make and keep us real in our bearing toward our fellowmen, so that they can count on us; so that they can know what our words are worth; so that, if ever in the dark days of misfortune they should be driven to ask from us a fulfillment of what we have said under the sunshine of prosperity, they might never be disappointed.

September twenty-fourth

Whenever you can find some church, or corner of a church, where you can actually put forth some energy of your own and impart some spiritual gift to your neighbors, you yourself will be spiritually more comforted and strengthened than if you had just sat idly in the pew and listened to the eloquence of a Chrysostom, or of Paul himself.

September twenty-fifth

To know that you have spoken from God to another soul, and helped that soul to find its Divine Master, and its heavenly home—that is certainly the highest of Christian joys; a chief reward of Christian work. The opportunity for such work and such reward is the great inducement to enter the Christian ministry, making it, as I believe it is, with all its pains and trying responsibilities, the happiest work ever appointed for man.

September twenty-sixth

It is a question whether an infidel who sends school books and medicines to a heathen land may not more nearly resemble the good Samaritan than would a Christian confessor who is content to send nothing at all.

September twenty-seventh

If you are a friend of Jesus Christ, the next time you find yourself in any trouble, or temptation, or sorrow, you may hear the voice which spoke to Simon, addressing you by name, and saying: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."

September twenty-eighth

It may be well that our social conversation should be decently clothed in becoming forms of courtesy, but we do not wish it padded and masked and disguised. Even our common forms of greeting ought to match the reality of the sentiments beneath them; they ought not to deceive. If your word of address would naturally lead a neighbor to suppose that you respect him, or that you love him, or that you are willing to serve him, or that you have all confidence in him—God forbid that you should be deceiving that neighbor in any of those matters.

September twenty-ninth

"Take my yoke upon you," He says, . . and you know this means the yoke of kindly service toward others. Jesus will teach . . that, by kindly helping others, they may find strength enough and to spare for their own heavy burdens; by cheering others in sorrow they may find their own sorrowing hearts comforted; in the act of forgiving others they may find their own sins forgiven; in loving others they themselves grow lovable to God and men.

September thirtieth

We sometimes speak slightingly of science, or fearfully, as if it were an enemy of the faith, the parent of scepticism and atheism. I believe we ought rather to thank God for it, and that its total influence has been, is and will be to call men back from the vain imaginations and superstitions and doubts of their own hearts to the real—the reality—the eternal truth. Whoever honestly bears witness to anything that is true is, either willingly or unwillingly, bearing witness on God's side.

October first

When one must sacrifice the body for the mind, let him see himself a step nearer those things which are eternal. The gain that has come to him in the enlarging of this higher intellectual nature cannot be measured by any scale of years; the treasures of knowledge should be estimated in the light of eternity. And when one has sacrificed the life of his mind for the life of his heart . . . shall he mourn as those without hope beside the tomb where so precious a part of him lies buried? . . Whatever good thing he has laid down in the way of Christian duty, of devoted love, that good thing he shall take again.

October second

Every day and every year is bringing to everyone opportunity for the largest and best, and most honorable and most acceptable service he has it in him to render.

October third

There is a kind of costly service and sacrifice that is never exchanged except among friends who love each other dearly. We are not willing to accept it from strangers, because it costs so much. Some day the Lord may hold out to you the privilege of rendering some such friendly and costly service. Are you going to shake your head and say: "Not now, Lord; a little later, maybe, when I have finished my book, or my game, or my other task. When I have nothing else to do, I will hear Thee again of this matter." That kind of chance does not wait; if you treat it so you lose it.

October fourth

It is a great safeguard to character to have the capital of your time and strength invested in some business which really blesses the community.

October fifth

It is true that we no longer get our warnings from the lips of inspired prophets, but there are other ways of receiving the message if we have ears to hear. Whenever any child or man, having taken any part of a wrong step begins to feel the unhappy consequences of it, there is the warning, and it may come as straight from Heaven and with as Divine authority as if it were delivered by some prophet of old.

October sixth

It was a beautiful thought of the old Hebrews that our past and future are somehow joined in God. He is the One from everlasting to everlasting. All the generations of men come together in Him. He was the God of the fathers; He shall be the God of the children. He gathers up into Himself not only our brightest hopes, but also our tenderest memories.

October seventh

Some of us have somehow fallen into the idea that justice, God's justice, was a thing to be afraid of and avoided. The old prophets always give us to understand that it is a thing to be longed for; that the one hope of the world is the unfailing justice of God.

You might build splendid churches all over the land; you might devote your whole fortune to the endowing of mission societies or theological seminaries, —even so you cannot hope to please God unless you are willing to do justly and to love mercy.

October eighth

It is through our conscience that Jesus Christ makes His strongest appeal to us. If we ever truly yield to Him, it will be because our conscience has recognized Him as Master.

October ninth

Any piece of work that is really big —big enough so that a true man would be justified in devoting his whole soul to the doing of it—that piece of work will be too big for you to see the end of it in this short earthly life. You will have to be contented, as Moses was, if, before you close your eyes for the last sleep, God will take you up to some height of vision from which you can look forward in hope to the future accomplishment of your heart's desire after you are gone.

October tenth

The lifeless pages of a printed book can never hold a real confession of faith. The best they can do is to record such a confession; the heart of a living man is the only vessel on earth which can possibly hold it.

October eleventh

You never found a criminal who took much comfort in the word "justice." Try to cheer him by saying that "he will be sure to get justice," and he will answer that that is just what he is afraid of. But if you can hold out any hope to him that his Judge is merciful and gracious, that is better news. And that is the hope which the Bible holds out to us. Our Judge is just, for He will never wrong friend or enemy. But He is more than just; He is full of grace.

October twelfth—Columbus Day

The genius of the American nation, that for which God was planning in the discovery of this new continent, was something very different from a mere vulgar rush for wealth, or a blatant boastfulness over bigness, and noise; and this better, truer America, still lives in the thought and hope and love of many of our people.

October thirteenth

Righteousness — rightness; right means straight. All things human are strongly infected with a tendency to go crooked. You straighten them out to-day and hammer every angle into what looks like a faultless line, and you will wake up to-morrow to find a dozen new kinks at most unexpected places. It is a splendid word and a splendid thought, that of the old Hebrew, that our God is a righteous God, and that He loves straight paths and straight men and women to walk in them; that every moral crookedness is an offense in His sight.

October fourteenth

Human life is the precious thing. It is rightly thought to be a mark of advancing civilization that men should learn to value even the humblest human life above all price in material riches.

October fifteenth

In our solicitude for our neighbors' houses we must not neglect our own. Is your own house safe? You would not rest comfortably to-night if someone had shown you that the foundations of the house you live in were a sham; mere stucco and crumbling mortar what had professed to be solid rock; and that with the first hard shower that should moisten them or the pressure of the first stiff breeze blowing against its wall, the whole pretentious concern would crash together into the cellar, bearing you and yours in the ruin. You ought not to rest comfortably to-night if that is the sort of dwelling place you have been making for your soul.

October sixteenth

So soon as our eyes are opened to see the life that Jesus lived, our hearts tell us that is the life every man ought to be living.

October seventeenth

It is very often a sign of grace to have a cheerful countenance and an encouraging ring to the voice; the sort of good cheer that will survive a fourteen days' storm. . . I am afraid our faith has not enough of that robust and joyful quality. It is too much like a barometer; it goes up and down with the weather. We believe in God when the sun shines; when everybody else is laughing we can smile a little too. But how often we fill the air with lamentations at the first hint of sorrow, or loss, or danger! It ought not to be so if we believe in God. Our faces ought to be of the sort that would make the darkest day seem bright for those about us.

October eighteenth

Forgiveness, life, kingdom: three words, but not to be separated. They all come together in the one Gospel of Christ.

October nineteenth

This is a good world in which to live; it must be so since God created it, and Jesus Christ thought it worth dying for to redeem it. But it is not the kind of world where all things turn out right, as a matter of course. It is not a world where any and every road you may happen into will be sure to bring you to the right destination.

October twentieth

For some reason God has so ordered the affairs of men in this world that witness-bearing becomes the most important service that one man can render to his fellows. We do not all know everything; at the outset we know scarcely anything of what we need to know. And when the knowledge of these important facts comes, it is not revealed to all, directly and indifferently. Some one man makes the discovery, is shown the vision, and then it becomes his gracious mission to tell his neighbors what he has seen.

October twenty-first

Every story of another's fall, especially if it has been unexpected, startling, ought to send us at an early hour to some lonely place where we can open our hearts to God and pray that He will cleanse us from this hidden fault.

October twenty-second

It has often been the dream of good men, whether they call themselves monks or Puritans, that they could devise some scheme of precise discipline that should shut all the saints in and all the sinners out. But if they had studied Christ's parable of the tares, they might have known beforehand that the scheme would not work. For the attempt fails both ways. So much of the world's sin, alas, often finds its way in among the so-called saints, and so much of the Divine grace, thank God, often finds its way out among the so-called sinners.

October twenty-third

Do you not grow homesick sometimes for the old-fashioned loyalty; where brave men made it their first care not to exact deference for themselves, but to show deference to someone else?

What you need to learn, and what the noblest men of all ages would teach us, is, that no true manhood is possible until you have found some authority above yourself to which you bow with unquestioning loyalty.

October twenty-fourth

The recognized test of genius in every department is that it should have some gift of prophetic power; should be able to see and declare, in some way, that unchanging Eternal, which is always manifesting itself through the shifting phenomena of Time.

October twenty-fifth

It may sometimes be more of a kindness to some poor fellow, in your neighborhood, if you will take time to stop and look at him, look into him, look him through, than if, without looking, you tossed him a piece of money to be rid of him.

If you know of any soul anywhere who is now in the hour of darkest temptation—his Gethsemane, and you will hasten to his side to stay with Him through it, I am sure you will find the Master going there with you or before you.

October twenty-sixth

The doctrine of atonement means that when Christ bids us turn the other cheek, instead of striking back, he is simply bidding us imitate his Father, God, who loved us when we did not love Him, and sent His Son that we might live through Him.

October twenty-seventh

Every sincere man will have still a vivid sense of the weakness of the faith by which he has taken hold of the hand of Christ. But if we have taken hold of that hand at all, we have a right to lift our heads higher, and to breathe more freely, and to tread more confidently, because we have heard our best Friend say: "I am He that was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore."

October twenty-eighth

Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that it is well with us if we often do what is right, or if we generally avoid what is very wrong. . . "He that is not with me is against me." The question is a very sharp one: accept or refuse; love or hate; friend or foe. And in God's book of remembrance, what answer to that question stands opposite each of our names?

October twenty-ninth

Civilization is largely a matter of customs, and to throw aside the customs might mean to forfeit the whole inheritance of the ages and make a savage of yourself once more.

October thirtieth

No two descendants of Adam are just alike. Each fresh human child will grow into a shape a little different from that of any child before it, and yet the world over, and through all the ages, the human body is the same; bears one inimitable and unmistakeable type, which the living soul of man always shapes for its visible habitation. And so we are prepared to expect that the Church, this visible body of the spirit of Jesus, with all its diversity of growth, will follow some one type, some enduring mark or marks divinely appointed, by which we can everywhere recognize it under all its varieties.

October thirty-first

There are mountains of vision, and men climb them now and then, and see things; and it is by the guidance of what they see up there that human society makes its progress down here. . . All the great reformers were men who had been on the mountain. Lincoln saw that this nation could not remain half slave and half free, and that vision made him our leader. . . I wish we could catch the old Hebrew habit of thinking every such vision of useful sagacity and discernment is a gift from the Lord, and to be improved with a sacred sense of accountability to Him, so that every statesman, far-sighted enough to lead his people, every social reformer—yes, and every captain of industry, would often hear a voice and recognize it as the awful voice of God, solemnly charging him to faithfulness in making all things according to the pattern that has been shown him on the mount.

November first

The strange fact is that the Maker of this world, to whom certainly it rightfully belonged, the whole of it, when He assumed human form and walked about over its fields and roads, laid no exclusive claim to any part of it. . . Any man endued with Christ's spirit, if he should happen to hold title to certain houses and lands, could hardly in his own mind think of his title in the light of an exclusive possession, for it is enough for the disciple that he should be as his Master.

November second

The whole story of human progress is made up of the combined biographies of those choicer spirits who fall again and again and again; who forget the number of past failures in their unchanging determination to keep on till they succeed. . . Forgetting the failures behind and still reaching forth to the unknown success ahead, some one touches it at last.

November third

To save a man, in the language of the Gospel, means to make a whole man of him; to deliver him from every sort of perversion or mutilation of any part of his nature; to develop all his God-given powers to the utmost. No part of him must be wasted; every part of him, body, soul and spirit, must be saved.

November fourth

A late writer has well said: "The great causes of God and humanity are not defeated by the hot assaults of the Devil, but by the slow, crushing, glacier-like mass of thousands and thousands of nobodies. . . We shall be followed and judged, each of us who think ourselves nobodies, for his or her personal attitude to the great movement of our time." How true that is! If every citizen among the hundreds of thousands in a city knew that he was somebody, we should not wait so anxiously for the final counting of the ballots.

November fifth

What we need, and always have needed, and always shall need for the public safety, is a man here and there among the crowd—one who is no longer a child blown about by every wind of doctrine, but a man grown, able to think his own thoughts, see with his own eyes, choose his own ground and hold it, whatever others say and wherever others go; that is, a man of culture, strong enough to stand for something, and leave a mark that will stay in the course of human events.

November sixth

It seems to me wonderfully interesting that a perfectly holy life could have been lived for so many years in a little place like Nazareth, and no one had taken special note of it. It shows what a simple and natural thing goodness may be. Nothing pretentious about it; nothing portentious about it.

November seventh

One of our statesmen used to say many years ago in view of the facts of African slavery; "I tremble when I think that God is just." . . Are there not a good many facts connected with our institutions of drinking—the trade in it; the laws about it; the vast profits made out of it as a price of blood; the awful degradation caused by it; the selfish indifference of most of us to it—that a man need not be very much of a prophet, if ever these facts are brought home to him, that he should say in his heart: "I tremble when I think that God is just."

November eighth

I want as much as I can have of the personal element in my religious faith, so that whatever else may appear doubtful in the world about me, I may be able to say with all my heart, "I know whom I have believed."

November ninth

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Not three Gods, but one God: God over us, God with us, God in us.

November tenth

When you have seen a score or so of foolish fishermen and other humble folk, who had been scattered and dazed by a great calamity, transformed into a conquering host, who can stand before rulers and kings without faltering, and can reason before philosophers without stumbling, and can convert nations and rejuvenate a worn-out world, you must be dull at wit indeed if you do not begin to suspect that there is a strange secret with them somewhere; that these amazing results follow from some hidden cause; that this mighty river, plowing with swelling current through the ages, tells of some hidden spring back among the hills. . . Any man anywhere who fears God may hope for admission to this favored company.

November eleventh

What America most of all needs to save it, humanly speaking, is that enough of the people should deliberately invest their treasure in the things that make for righteousness. If they will do that, you need feel little anxiety about their hearts. Their hearts will be in heaven while their feet walk on the earth. And for them the heavenly reward will not be altogether a matter of faith and hope; God will be paying it to them liberally, day by day, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.

November twelfth

There is hardly a word in our language, or in any language, that means more than "home." It means the safest place for us; the best-known place; the place that always stays the same; the place where our dearest ones live with us —where our life began, and where we instinctively hope that it may end.

November thirteenth

"The love of Christ constraineth us." Does not this set forth the one peculiar characteristic of the Gospel, marking it off from all other religions; the one peculiar characteristic of every Christian, marking him off from all other men? . . . In the natural heart of man there may always be present innumerable seeds of good impulse, but almost frozen they are, alas! buried. The one thing that can bring them to life, that regenerates the heart, is the warmth streaming upon us from the Sun of Righteousness; and that is the mighty influence of Christ's love.

November fourteenth

The next time we find ourselves tempted to discontent for lack of appreciation, stop and think of those silent years in the life of the one Man of all ages who was born to shine and rule.

November fifteenth

The wonder is that we are not all of us constrained by the love of Him who died for us, though we have sinned against Him. You would think such love as that must so take possession of all hearts that no room would be left for any rival affection. If we have the heart of a true man in us, or of a true woman, then Jesus should own the whole of it.

November sixteenth

Let God choose whom He will for the public office of preaching to the multitudes at Pentecost, or ruling among the churches, if only He will fit us for this quieter service of going in our Master's name, and with our Master's spirit, into any humble home where some poor soul or body needs His help and comfort.

November seventeenth

God is a God of truth, and there is nothing which He more instinctively hates than a lie; a false pretence of any sort. And the holier the pretence the more God seems to hate the falseness of it. By as much as a true Christian is the dearest thing to Him, a hypocrite is the most intolerable thing to Him. For even if there were nothing positively very wicked in a hypocrite's life, as we count wickedness, yet the emptiness of all those fine professions, the hollowness of that glaring sham, is something which a God of truth cannot away with. He grows weary of it.

November eighteenth

If Christ's name should come into your familiar family conversation, would it come as a stranger, bringing a sense of constraint, or would it come as belonging there by the best possible right—one of the household words—a name that you all love to remember—a presence that you all love to have there with you?

November nineteenth

It has been one of the most convincing evidences of Christianity that its power over men grows stronger in proportion as their need grows greater.

November twentieth

"What is in a name?" some ask. But there is much in it; and we all think so when the name happens to be our own. We all prefer that our neighbors should care enough about us to know our name and remember it, and be able to call us by it. When one calls you by name it shows that a certain part of his memory and affection and hope is reserved to you, belongs to you, and will stay empty unless you fill it. What if the God of heaven should ever call you by name, showing that you personally were something to Him, that some part of His memory and affection and hope was reserved to you, belonged to you, would stay empty unless you filled it! If I can know that I am as much to the Eternal God as that, I shall be very sure that death cannot make an end of me.

November twenty-first

A disciple of Jesus will sometimes say: "I must be good, to make God love me." No, no; that would be beginning at the wrong end altogether; but "because God has shown such love toward me, therefore I must love Him." That stands as the first commandment of the Christian law. And, if I love Him, then I must keep all His commandments; that is the substance of our morality.

November twenty-second

To know the goodness of the Lord and not love Him for it; to come under the strong attraction of such a nature as Jesus Christ and resist the attraction—why, you are wounding the whole affectional side of yourself. The faculty of love is too delicate to trifle with. A man may find that he has destroyed it; that he can no longer love anyone but himself; and, when he has reached that point, it is likely he may fall to hating himself. For life without love is not worth the living, and the man himself comes to feel that it had been good for him if he had not been born.

November twenty-third

Every sin is something started on a down track, and, if it has not gone before us to judgment or confession, then it is following after, more and more swiftly. Sometime those sins will all catch up. . . Ah! shall we not send them on to judgment ahead of us? Shall we not freely confess them to God, and have the record of them washed out in the blood of the Lamb before that world of final retribution has been reached?

November twenty-fourth

Our Lord Himself was a recluse sometimes. He had His lonely gardens of prayer and mountains of vision, in which few could go. But for a disciple of Jesus, as for the Master, those doors of separation must open outward easily. The lonely glory of the Transfiguration will only prepare the way for meeting the crowd down on the plain and healing the poor child.

November twenty-fifth

The twelfth chapter of Hebrews begins with the exhortation, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus"—and then goes on to say: "Let not that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed." A strange rule for the race-course; each able-bodied runner to reach back a hand to the faltering competitors behind him. But this simply shows us how the Christian course differs from all worldly and selfish forms of competition. Here the man who can push the largest number of his fellow-runners up to the goal ahead of him carries off the prize.

November twenty-sixth

Heaven—there is no toll-gate on the highway that leads thither. Its benefits are as free as the air—offered freely for the breath of every living thing. The only price is that we should open our lungs and draw it in from Heaven's windows. "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

November twenty-seventh

Can we believe that God has provided and reserved so bounteous a land as ours for so vast a people, educated through so long a time at so great a cost, without some grand purpose for that people to accomplish? Of course He has such a purpose. He has provided this vast store of materials because He intends to make something out of them at which all mankind shall wonder: something in which all the nations of the earth shall be blessed: a great nation, free, prosperous, at peace; knowing no king but Jesus; knowing no enemy but idleness and ignorance and injustice and vice; a nation strong enough to compel the whole world's fear, but using this strength to bless the whole world; . . a people whose God is the Lord.

November twenty-eighth

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Others may hear the rumor now and then; they may be startled by strange sounds, or dazzled by strange sights, but they do not learn the secret unless they fear God.

November twenty-ninth

Every man has in him the possible making of a Cæsar, himself his own god; his pleasure and reputation treated as the whole purpose of the empire. But every man also has in him some distant blood relationship to that other Lord who died on Calvary. . . And, if Christianity has really come near enough to touch Him, the proposal is just this, that His world should be turned upside down.

November thirtieth

With regard to his highest interests, his best work, every faithful Christian is looking toward the day, not toward the night; the future means increasing brightness, not increasing gloom. The past, and even the present, have been a state of drowsiness, from which he must be aroused to new diligence, such as becomes the day. And the final issue will be not universal darkness and cold: the sun setting never to rise again; the universe run down—but eternal life; a new sun rising above the horizon never to set again: a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

December first

The old mob was quite right about it; the Christian messengers all did contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus. That is the issue exactly. You must not let any soft-spoken peacemaker deceive you about it, as if Christianity made some less radical proposal; as if Jesus were willing to leave Cæsar still on the throne, too. It is not so; the angry mob knew better. . . Your world is to be turned upside down, if you become a Christian; Christ's will made supreme, and yon Cæsar made a loyal servant of God.

December second

We may be sure that it is not the actual attainments in holiness that God regards, but the willingness to attain, the pressing forward to attain. Only let a man be started upward, and there will be time enough to rise before God is through with him. . . God never withholds the straw and then demands the bricks.

December third

There is a kind of fear—or you may call it reverence—which is a part of the highest love—all love. And the man whom you, yourself, would be willing to admit to your most confidential intimacy must possess that sort of fear toward you. He must be one whom you can trust not to presume upon your intimacy; not to thrust himself upon you further than you would wish him to go; not to pry into what you did not wish him to know. You can trust him not to profane the Holy of Holies with you. In this sense he must fear, else you would not have thrown down the outer barriers of reserve. So we deal with each other, and so God deals with us. He invites us into His familiar friendship, but we are cautioned not to presume upon it. His name becomes a dear and household word, but the old commandment stands that we take not that name in vain.

December fourth

When a man made in the image of God says, "I am willing," it ought to mean that something is going to happen.

December fifth

In every department of human effort the successful workers are those who have mastered the art of mental and practical perspective. Oh, if we could acquire more of this art of perspective, all of us, in the one matter of our reading! We have not much time for reading, most of us, and yet think of the columns and pages that we do read, even with a scarcity of time, that would hardly be worth reading if centuries of leisure were at our disposal. Crimes and scandals, and all the much-ado-about-nothing that crowd the columns of the daily paper —you read those, and books too, that will be forgotten almost before the ink is dry upon their pages. But for the real books that will never be forgotten there is no time. Have we not mistaken the background for the foreground? Careful to bring so many things in, while the one thing needful, or worth while, is crowded out.

December sixth

How slow of heart we are to accept all the gladness that the Gospel has given us! It saddens us that time moves quickly. We think and speak as if the departing years were taking with them all that we hold dear. Can we not learn to strengthen ourselves in the belief that the fast-coming years are bringing with them what we hold dearer? Ours is not the unspoken sadness of evening, but the joyous exhilaration of the morn. Even when those sadder memories come of loved ones gone, ought not our sorrow itself to become a form of hope, since we believe that those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him?

December seventh

The worst unhappiness in this world, I suppose, always comes in one way or another out of selfishness, which is another name for pleasure-seeking; and the best happiness in the world comes in one way or another out of love, which is another name for pleasure-giving.

December eighth

We are conscious of having so little power for Christian work. . . How you have envied some servant of God who has this very power which you lack! . . . You want the gift—are you willing to pay the price? The thought comes over you with a shock what the price is that many servants of God have actually paid to get that power of blessing: it is the price of pain. They have been made perfect through suffering. The comfort with which they cheer the hearts of others is that with which they themselves have been comforted of God.

December ninth

I admire the good manners of any man or woman in society to whom it has become an unconscious habit to try to give pleasure to those who might not otherwise have any—to the people near the wall and near the door.

December tenth

No age ever needed more than ours a deep, personal religious faith in the hearts of the people. Men have always needed such faith that they might be fit for heaven, but we need it in this democratic age that we may be fit for earth.

December eleventh

Friends, is it God's salvation that you are moving toward; that the swift years are bringing nearer to you? You know whether or not that is true for you. Something is nearer than when you first heard this Word of God—what is it? What is it that the days are bringing toward you so swiftly? Ah, friends, wake up and see. It is no time for sleeping till that is settled. You ought not to close your eyes in sleep to-night until you know the answer to the question, What is it that the days are bringing toward you so swiftly?—for whatever it is, it is nearer to-night than when this day began.

December twelfth

The mere costliness of the house of worship is not an offense against God nor a defrauding of the poor. It seems to me old David's impulse was a thoroughly worthy one, which made him uneasy unless the house in which he worshipped his God was finer and costlier than the house that he had built to cover his own head.

December thirteenth

From the day when our first parents began to sin, this world has been full of noisy excuses. For there was the apple eaten; and the woman said: "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat;" and the man said: "The woman gave it to me and I did eat." . . Where can you find anybody to acknowledge that the bad thing done is his own fault? . . . Stop your false and foolish excuses for your past sin, that you may have breath to praise God for His pardon; and your idle excuses from duty, that you may have breath to say, "Here am I, send me;" and your complainings over your woes and imagined wrongs, that you may have breath to thank God for His mercies.

December fourteenth

Wherever man lays down his life, not for the sake of laying it down, but that he may take it again in some higher form, our reason says that he does well.

December fifteenth

"Let this cup pass from me." It was the prayer of Christ, and it is the right prayer for any of His disciples. . . Put your desire into words; ask of God, "Save me from this hour." But what shall you further say? For the perplexity does not always end with this first petition. "Save me from this hour" is a right beginning; but you will not always be able to rest in it as the right ending, for trouble itself often proves to be a wonderful educator of men. It will often open your eyes. It will often show you things that at first you could not see. Under its stern discipline you will sometimes feel your own soul gathering itself for the conflict; disclosing powers of endurance that you had not suspected before. What if the trouble was sent you for this very purpose—to make you strong?

December sixteenth

What need there is to remind ourselves in this age of the world that man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth! The man himself is what is wanted.

December seventeenth

One who has sat at Jesus' feet long enough to learn of Him will know quickly what things may be left in the background, and which are the few things, or what is the one thing, that must be brought out to the foreground. The one good part that he has chosen enables him to rule and arrange all these other interests of his life more easily. And so he gets rid of many troubles and many cares. A beauty comes into his life, a symmetry, a peace; it is the very peace of God—something that all the riches of the world cannot give, and all the cares and troubles of the world cannot take away.

December eighteenth

I believe that every man, woman and child in our churches ought to share in the giving as in the other parts of God's worship. Let us not cherish a foolish pride and hold back our silver because we cannot give gold, or hold back our coppers because we cannot give silver; make no bricks at all, because we have not straw enough for the largest number of them. Our Master is not Pharoah, but God. He reserves His very warmest commendation for her who holds but two mites, and gives those.

December nineteenth

Has the Lord been invited to come in and look over with you the entries in your account book, and to make His comment on the various balances? Has He been trusted with the combination to the safe? If not, suppose you leave your desk for a moment and go softly to the door, and listen whether, perhaps, that door of your office is not the door at which He stands knocking.

December twentieth — Forefathers' Day

Even in the worst times, when all things were falling into chaos, always just at the crisis would appear some Elijah, or John the Baptist, or other like man, firm enough to stand, if need be, alone against the world, and pull the world his way—God's way. The man was never wanting in the old days in Israel. And the man never shall be wanting. That is the promise; and how good a promise it is. For this manhood is God's most precious commodity. Of all things He has made, this has cost the most to make.

December twenty-first

The memory is an essential part of our believing in personal immortality. "If a man die, shall he live again?" If he shall, then he must remember. There is no other conceivable mark of his identity. . . . The Bible would teach us that death, or something after death, will quicken the memory and make our blurred records stand out distinctly, so that "everyone of us shall be able to give account of himself to God."

December twenty-second

If ever the American people should honor and value mere money above learning they would be unworthy of their origin. . . A wiser country, a better educated people, is one thing that every worthy son of the Pilgrims must demand. Our fathers have taught us to desire a better country, that is a better city, and, God being our helper, we propose to have it.

December twenty-third

As compared with the nations generally, there was once a large degree of righteousness in the hearts of our people, and time has shown it was a good foundation on which to build any superstructure of national greatness that God might be designing for us. But this kind of foundation has to be not dead but living. The stones in this temple must be living stones. The ancient virtues of the Pilgrim Fathers or of our great Revolutionary leaders can no more save America from her twentieth century enemies than the faith of Abraham could save Jerusalem from Titus and his Romans.

December twenty-fourth

May reverence and justice and freedom and charity and courage in the right make their home among us! Give us peace with each other and with all nations of the earth for the good of the world and the glory of mankind.

December twenty-fifth — Christmas Day

This one day in the year differs from other days in this, that to-day the Lord Himself takes this little child and puts him in the midst of us; and to-day, by common consent, we drop our outer employments, and close our school books, and postpone our other discussions and quarrels, while we, all of us, soldiers and statesmen, and lawyers and leaders, and priests and Pharisees, or whatever we are, fasten our eyes upon the figure at the centre of the circle—this little child.

December twenty-sixth

That one pilgrimage of wise men following the star and bearing gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh, and bowing low in reverence when they saw the young Child and Mary, His mother, and offering them gifts: has it not commended to our reverence every little child, and every mother, and has it not set the example for innumerable caravans of gifts, of which the little ones are to be the chief recipients?

December twenty-seventh

The question to ask ourselves is not, "Am I as watchful to do my Lord's will, as repentant of sin, as eager for holiness, as near to God, as I was a year ago?" but, "Am I much nearer to God now than I was a year ago? Am I much more eager for holiness, more repentant of sin, more watchful to do my Lord's will? Have I been waking up as the day advances? Whether I hear it or not, His voice has been summoning me to higher duties; the morning is brighter; the day's tasks are more urgent. Have I been waking up to them?"

December twenty-eighth

Does the love of Christ constrain us, friends? Does it constrain you? Christ's love is strong enough to do it, but does it? A man can keep himself, if he will, beyond the reach of the very strongest motives. The heart grows callous after repeated kindnesses that have been unworthily received. Have you not been reminded of it, when you have heard men mocking at the name of Jesus Christ? If they are determined not to love the Saviour who suffered for them, it may make them hate Him the more to remember what strange kindnesses He showed to them. . . "The love of Christ constrained." Are you that sort of a Christian? Think whether it is so or not; give your answer to Him.

December twenty-ninth

We have climbed now almost to the crest of the hill; almost to the end of the old year. A very few steps more and we shall cross the divide, and look down into the unknown country beyond—what shall we see there? What is God's purpose in bringing us thus far on our journey?

December thirtieth

One often finds that he has left behind him in the old so much he never recovers in the new. Beautiful things had grown up in a community where people had lived side by side in friendly helpfulness through the years or for generations. The old family alliances, the old local traditions and objects of pride, the pretty courtesies and ceremonies peculiar to that particular locality, the local standards which have supplied the measure of achievement, the old songs of the people, the old school house on the green, the old church on the hill, and the old churchyard.

This journey of time that we are always making is the irrevocable journey. We might travel back a thousand leagues of space; we cannot travel back over one moment of time. . . The old country —that dear yesterday where we thought we had a home—has been left forever behind. We shall never see its shores again. . . This is the pathos of human life.

December thirty-first

What is after all the one great object of human life? What is "the one thing needful?" . . The deeper heart of our human race has always felt that that "one thing needful" for human worthiness must somehow be connected with God. But there the difficulty appears. God is so great and seems so far away. So the old story from the Gospel is dear to us, and has been helpful and cheering to generations of readers; for Mary chose the good part, when she sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His word. For that was Immanuel—God with us: the will of God revealed in matters of present human duty; the glory of God embodied in a human form, and shining from a human life.

The whole world knows now that Jesus' life was triumphant, after all. All the sorrow and pain and failure of it were only for a little while. What came at last, and came to stay, was the victory.

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